THE

OLD BACHELOR.

A

COMEDY.

BY

Mr WILLIAM CONGREVE.

Quem tulit ad Scenam ventoſo gloria curru,
Exanimat lentus ſpectator, ſedulus, inflat.
Sic leve, ſic parvum eſt, animum quod laudis avarum
Subruit, aut reſicit——— HOR. *Epiſt.* 1. *Lib.* 2.

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THE LIFE OF WILLIAM CONGREVE Esq;

THIS Gentleman was descended from the ancient family of the Congreves, of Congreve in Staffordshire, his father being second son of Richard Congreve, of that place.—Some authors, and in particular Sir James Ware, contend for his having been born in Ireland: but as Jacob, who was particularly acquainted with him, and who in his preface acknowledges his obligations to Mr Congreve for his communication of what related to himself, has absolutely contradicted that report, I shall, on his authority, which I consider to be the same as Mr Congreve's own, fix the spot of his nativity at a place called Bardsa, not far from Leeds in Yorkshire, being part of the estate of Sir John Lewis, his great-uncle by his mother's side.—It is certain, however, that he went over to that kingdom very young.—For his father being only a younger brother, and provided for in the army by a commission on the Irish establishment, was compelled to undertake a journey thither in consequence of his command; which he afterwards parted with to accept of the management of a considerable estate belonging to the Burlington family, which fix'd his residence there.—However, though he suffer'd this son to receive his first tincture of letters in the great school at Kilkenny, and afterwards, to complete his classical learning under the direction of Dr Ash, in the university of Dublin, yet being desirous that his studies should be directed to profit as well as improvement, he sent him over to England soon after the revolution, and placed him as a student in the Temple.—The dry, ploding study of the law, however, was by no means suitable to the sprightly volatile genius of Mr Congreve, and therefore, though he did not

want application in those studies to which his genius led him, yet he did not even attempt to make any proficiency in a service which he was probably conscious he should make no figure in.—Excellence and perfection he aimed at the acquiring; for in the very earliest effort of his genius, and a very early one indeed it was, *viz.* his novel, call'd *Love and Duty reconciled*, written when he was not above seventeen years of age, he had not only endeavoured at, but indeed succeeded in, the presenting to the world not a mere novel according to the taste and fashion then prevailing, but a piece which should point out, and be in itself a model of, what novels ought to be.—And though this cannot itself be called with propriety a dramatic work, yet he has so strictly adher'd to dramatic rules in the composition of it, that his arriving at so great a degree of perfection in the regular drama, in so short a time afterwards, is hardly to be wonder'd at.——His first play was the *Old Bachelor*, and was the amusement of some leisure hours during a slow recovery from a fit of illness, soon after his return to England, and was in itself so perfect, that Mr Dryden, on its being shewn to him, declar'd he had never in his life seen such a first play; and that great Poet having, in conjunction with Mr Southerne, and Arthur Manwaring, Esq; given it a slight revisal, Dr Davenant, who was the manager of Drury-Lane Theatre, and was delighted both with the piece and its author, brought it on the stage in 1693, where it met with such universal approbation, that Mr Congreve, though he was but nineteen years of age at the time of his writing it, became now consider'd as a prop to the declining stage, and a rising genius in dramatic poetry.—The next year he produced the *Double Dealer*, which, for what reason however I know not, did not meet with so much success as the former.——The merit of his first play, however, had obtain'd him the favour and patronage of Lord Halifax, and some peculiar marks of distinction from Queen Mary, on whose death, which happened in the close of this year, he wrote a very elegant elegiac pastoral.—In 1695, when Betterton opened the new house

in Lincoln's-Inn-Fields, Mr Congreve joining with him gave him his comedy of *Love for Love*, with which the company opened their campaign, and which met with such ſucceſs, that they immediately offer'd the Author a ſhare in the management of the houſe, on condition of his furniſhing them with one play yearly.——This offer he accepted of; but whether through indolence, or that correctneſs which he look'd on as neceſſary to his works, his *Mourning Bride* did not come out till 1697, nor his *Way of the World* till two years after that.—The indifferent ſucceſs this laſt-mentioned play, tho' an exceeding good one, met from the public, compleated that diſguſt to the Theatre, which a long conteſt with Jeremy Collier, who had attacked the immoralities of the Engliſh Stage, and more eſpecially ſome of his pieces, had begun, and he determined never more to write for the ſtage.——This reſolution he punctually kept, and Mr Dennis's obſervation on that point will, I am afraid, be too true, when he ſaid, "that Mr "Congreve quitted the Stage early, and that Comedy "left it with him."—Yet, though he quitted dramatic writing, he did not lay down the pen entirely; but occaſionally wrote many little pieces both in proſe and verſe, all of which ſtand on the records of literary fame.

It is very poſſible, however, that he might not ſo ſoon have given way to this diſguſt, had not the eaſineſs of his circumſtances render'd any ſubſervience to the opinions and caprice of the Town abſolutely unneceſſary to him.—For his abilities having very early in life raiſed him to the acquaintance of the Earl of Halifax, who was then the Mæcenas of the age, that nobleman, deſirous of raiſing ſo promiſing a genius above the neceſſity of too haſty productions, made him one of the commiſſioners for licenſing hackney-coaches, or, according to Coxeter, a commiſſioner of the Wine Licence.—He ſoon after beſtow'd on him a place in the Pipe-Office, and not long after that, gave him a poſt in the cuſtoms, worth ſix hundred pounds *per annum*.

In the year 1718, he was appointed ſecretary of Jamaica, ſo that, with all together, his income, towards the latter part of his life, was upwards of twelve hun-

dred pounds a year.—Thus rais'd above dependance, it is no wonder he would no longer render himself subject to the capricious cenſures of impotent critics.—And had his poetical father, Mr Dryden, ever been rais'd to the ſame circumſtances, it is probable that his *All for Love* would not now have been eſteemed the beſt of his dramatic pieces, nor would he have been compell'd for a bare livelihood to the drudgery of producing four plays in a ſpace of time ſcarce more than ſufficient for forming the plot of one.

But to return to Congreve.——The greateſt part of the laſt twenty years of his life were ſpent in eaſe and retirement, and he either did not, or affected not to give himſelf any trouble about reputation.——Yet ſome part of that conduct might proceed from a degree of pride; T. Cibber, in his Lives of the Poets, Vol. IV. p. 93, relates an anecdote of him, which I cannot properly omit here,—"When the celebrated Voltaire, (ſays he), "was in England, he waited upon Congreve, and "paſs'd him ſome compliments as to the reputation and "merit of his works.—Congreve thank'd him, but at the "ſame time told that ingenious foreigner, he did not "chuſe to be conſider'd as an Author, but only as a "private gentleman, and in that light expected to be "viſited.—Voltaire anſwered, That if he had never "been any thing but a private gentleman, in all pro-"bability he had never been troubled with that viſit."——And obſerves in his own account of the tranſaction, that he was not a little diſguſted with ſo unſeaſonable a piece of vanity.

Towards the cloſe of his life he was much afflicted with the gout; and making a tour to Bath, for the benefit of the waters, was unfortunately overturned in his chariot, by which it is ſuppos'd he got ſome inward bruiſe, as he ever after complained of a pain in his ſide, and on his return to London, continued gradually declining in his health, till the 19th of Jan. 1729, when he died, aged fifty-ſeven, at his houſe in Surry-ſtreet, in the Strand, and on the 26th following was buried in Weſtminſter-Abbey, the pall being ſupported by perſons of the firſt diſtinction.

PROLOGUE.

Spoken by Mrs BRACEGIRDLE.

HOW this vile world is chang'd! in former days,
Prologues were ſerious ſpeeches before plays;
Grave ſolemn things, as graces are to feaſts;
Where poets begg'd a bleſſing from their gueſts:
But now no more like ſuppliants we come;
A play makes war, and prologue is the drum;
Arm'd with keen ſatire and ſharp pointed wit,
We threaten you who do for judges ſit,
To ſave our plays, or elſe we'll damn your pit.
But for your comfort, it falls out to-day,
We've a young Author, and his firſt-born play;
So, ſtanding only on his good behaviour,
He's very civil, and intreats your favour.
Not but the man has malice, would he ſhow it,
But on my conſcience he's a baſhful poet;
You think that ſtrange——no matter, he'll out grow it.
Well, I'm his advocate——By me he prays you,
(I don't know whether I ſhall ſpeak to pleaſe you,)
He prays——O bleſs me! what ſhall I do now?
Hang me if I know what he prays, or how!
And 'twas the prettieſt prologue as he wrote it!
Well, the deuce take me, if I han't forgot it.
O Lord, for Heaven's ſake excuſe the play,
Becauſe, you know, if it be damn'd to day,
I ſhall be hang'd for wanting what to ſay.
For my ſake then——but I'm in ſuch confuſion,
I cannot ſtay to hear your reſolution. [Runs off.

Dramatis Perſonæ.

HEARTWELL, a ſurly old Bachelor, pretending to ſlight women, ſecretly in love with Silvia.
BELLMOUR, in love with Belinda.
VAINLOVE, capricious in his love, in love with Araminta.
SHARPER.
Sir JOSEPH WITTOLL.
Captain BLUFFE.
FONDLEWIFE, a banker.
SETTER, a pimp.
SERVANT to Fondlewiſe.

ARAMINTA, in love with Vainlove.
BELINDA, her couſin, an affected lady, in love with Bellmour.
LÆTITIA, wife to Fondlewife.
SILVIA, Vainlove's forſaken miſtreſs.
LUCY, her maid.
BETTY.
Boy and Footmen.

SCENE, *LONDON.*

THE OLD BACHELOR.

ACT I. SCENE I.

The Street.

BELLMOUR *and* VAINLOVE *meeting.*

BELLMOUR.

VAINLOVE, and abroad ſo early! good morrow; I thought a contemplative lover could no more have parted with his bed in a morning, than he could have ſlept in't.

Vain. Bellmour, good morrow——Why truth on't is, theſe early ſallies are not uſual to me; but buſineſs, as you ſee, Sir— [*Shewing letters.*] And buſineſs muſt be follow'd, or be loſt.

Bell. Buſineſs!—And ſo muſt time, my friend, be cloſe purſued or loſt. Buſineſs is the rub of life, perverts our aim, caſts off the bias, and leaves us wide and ſhort of the intended mark.

Vain. Pleaſure, I gueſs, you mean.

Bell. Ay, what elſe has meaning?

Vain. Oh, the wiſe will tell you——

Bell. More than they believe—or underſtand.

Vain. How, how, Ned, a wiſe man ſay more than he underſtands!

Bell. Ay, ay, wiſdom's nothing but a pretending to know and believe more than we really do. You read of but one wiſe man, and all that he knew was, that he knew nothing. Come, come, leave buſineſs to idlers, and wiſdom to fools; they have need of 'em: wit be

my faculty, and pleaſure my occupation; and let Father Time ſhake his glaſs. Let low and earthly ſouls grovel 'till they have work'd themſelves ſix foot deep into a grave—buſineſs is not my element—I roll in a higher orb, and dwell———

Vain. In caſtles i' th' air of thy own building: that's thy element, Ned.—Well, as high a flier as you are, I have a lure may make you ſtoop. [*Flings a letter.*

Bell. Ay, marry, Sir, I have a hawk's eye at a woman's hand—there's more elegancy in the falſe ſpelling of this ſuperſcription [*takes up the letter.*] than in all Cicero——Let me ſee——How now! *Dear perfidious Vainlove.* [*Reads.*

Vain. Hold, hold, 'Slife that's the wrong.

Bell. Nay, let's ſee the name (*Sylvia!*) how can'ſt thou be ungrateful to that creature? She's extremely pretty, and loves thee entirely—I have heard her breathe ſuch raptures about thee——

Vain. Ay, or any body that ſhe's about——

Bell. No, faith, Frank, you wrong her; ſhe has been juſt to you.

Vain. That's pleaſant, by my troth, from thee, who haſt had her.

Bell. Never—her affections: 'tis true by Heav'n, ſhe own'd it to my face; and bluſhing like the virgin morn when it diſclos'd the cheat, which that truſty bawd of nature, Night, had hid, confeſs'd her ſoul was true to you, tho' I by treachery had ſtol'n the bliſs——

Vain. So was true as turtle—in imagination, Ned, ha? Preach this doctrine to huſbands, and the married women will adore thee.

Bell. Why, faith, I think it will do well enough—if the huſband be out of the way, for the wife to ſhew her fondneſs and impatience of his abſence, by chuſing a lover as like him as ſhe can; and what is unlike, ſhe may help out with her own fancy.

Vain. But is it not an abuſe to the lover to be made a blind of?

Bell. As you ſay the abuſe is to the lover, not the huſband: for 'tis an argument of her zeal towards him, that ſhe will enjoy him in effigy.

Vain. It muſt be a very ſuperſtitious country, where ſuch zeal paſſes for true devotion. I doubt it will be damn'd by all our proteſtant huſbands for flat idolatry —But if you can make Alderman Fondlewife of your perſuaſion, this letter will be needleſs.

Bell. What, the old banker with the handſome wife!

Vain. Ay.

Bell. Let me ſee, Lætitia! Oh, tis a delicious morſel. Dear Frank, thou art the trueſt friend in the world.

Vain. Ay, am I not? To be continually ſtarting of hares for you to courſe. We were certainly cut out for one another; for my temper quits an amour, juſt where thine takes it up.—But read that, it is an appointment for me, this evening; when Fondlewife will be gone out of town, to meet the maſter of a ſhip, about the return of a venture which he's in danger of loſing. Read, read.

Bell. reads.] Hum, hum—*Out of town this evening, and talks of ſending for Mr Spintext to keep me company; but I'll take care he ſhall not be at home.* Good! Spintext! Oh the fanatic one-ey'd parſon!

Vain. Ay.

Bell. reads.] Hum, hum—*That your converſation will be much more agreeable, if you can counterfeit his habit to blind the ſervants.* Very good! Then I muſt be diſguiſed——With all my heart——It adds a guſto to an amour; gives it the greater reſemblance of theft; and among us lewd mortals, the deeper the ſin the ſweeter. Frank, I'm amaz'd at thy good-nature ———

Vain. Faith I hate love when 'tis forc'd upon a man, as I do wine—and this buſineſs is none of my ſeeking; I only happened to be once or twice where Lætitia was the handſomeſt woman in company, ſo conſequently applied myſelf to her—and it ſeems ſhe has taken me at my word:—had you been there, or any body, 't had been the ſame.

Bell. I wiſh I may ſucceed as the ſame.

Vain. Never doubt it; for if the ſpirit of cuckoldom be once raiſed up in a woman, the devil can't lay it, 'till ſhe has done't.

Bell. Pr'ythee, what ſort of fellow is Fondlewife?

Vain. A kind of mongrel zealot, ſometimes very preciſe and peeviſh: but I have ſeen him pleaſant enough in his way; much addicted to jealouſy, but more to fondneſs: ſo that as he's often jealous without a cauſe, he's as often ſatisfied without reaſon.

Bell. A very even temper, and fit for my purpoſe. I muſt get your man Setter to provide my diſguiſe.

Vain. Ay, you may take him for good and all if you will, for you have made him fit for nobody elſe—— Well——

Bell. You're going to viſit in return of Sylvia's letter —Poor rogue! Any hour of the day or night will ſerve her—but do you know nothing of a new rival there?

Vain. Yes, Heartwell, that ſurly old pretended woman-hater, thinks her virtuous; that's one reaſon why I fail her: I would have her fret herſelf out of conceit with me, that ſhe may entertain ſome thoughts of him. I know he viſits her ev'ry day.

Bell. Yet rails on ſtill, and thinks his love unknown to us; a little time will ſwell him ſo, he muſt be forc'd to give it birth; and the diſcovery muſt needs be very pleaſant from himſelf; to ſee what pains he will take, and how he will ſtrain to be delivered of a ſecret, when he has miſcarried of it already.

Vain. Well, good morrow, let's dine together; I'll meet thee at the old place.

Bell. With all my heart; it lyes convenient for us to pay our afternoon ſervices to our miſtreſſes; I find I am damnably in love, I'm ſo uneaſy for not having ſeen Belinda yeſterday.

Vain. But I ſaw my Araminta, yet am as impatient.

SCENE II.

BELLMOUR *alone.*

Bell. Why, what a cormorant in love am I! who not contented with the ſlavery of honourable love in one place, and the pleaſure of enjoying ſome half a ſcore miſtreſſes of my own acquiring, muſt yet take Vainlove's buſineſs upon my hands, becauſe it lay too heavy upon

his; ſo am not only forc'd to ly with other men's wives for 'em, but muſt alſo undertake the harder taſk of obliging their miſtreſſes—I muſt take up, or I ſhall never hold out: fleſh and blood cannot bear it always.

SCENE III.

To him SHARPER.

Sharp. I'm ſorry to ſee this, Ned: once a man comes to his ſoliloquies I give him for gone.

Bell. Sharper, I'm glad to ſee thee.

Sharp. What, is Belinda cruel, that you are ſo thoughtful?

Bell. No, faith, not for that—but there's a buſineſs of conſequence fall'n out to-day, that requires ſome conſideration.

Sharp. Pr'ythee, what mighty buſineſs of conſequence canſt thou have?

Bell. Why, you muſt know 'tis a piece of work toward the finiſhing of an alderman; it ſeems I muſt put the laſt hand to it, and dub him cuckold, that he may be of equal dignity with the reſt of his brethren: ſo I muſt beg Belinda's pardon.

Sharp. Faith e'en give her over for good and all: you can have no hopes of getting her for a miſtreſs; and ſhe is too proud, too inconſtant, too affected, and too witty, and too handſome for a wife.

Bell. But ſhe can't have too much money—there's twelve thouſand pounds, Tom.—'Tis true ſhe is exceſſively foppiſh and affected: but in my conſcience I believe the baggage loves me: for ſhe never ſpeaks well of me herſelf, nor ſuffers any body elſe to rail at me. Then, as I told you, there's twelve thouſand pound—Hum—Why, faith, upon ſecond thoughts, ſhe does not appear to be ſo very affected neither—Give her her due, I think the woman's a woman, and that's all. As ſuch I am ſure I ſhall like her; for the devil take me if I don't love all the ſex.

Sharp. And here comes one who ſwears as heartily he hates all the ſex.

SCENE IV.

[*To them*] HEARTWELL.

Bell. Who? Heartwell! ay, but he knows better things —— How now, George, where haſt thou been ſnarling odious truths, and entertaining company, like a phyſician, with diſcourſe of their diſeaſes and infirmities? What fine lady haſt thou been putting out of conceit with herſelf, and perſuading that the face ſhe had been making all the morning, was none of her own? for I know thou art as unmannerly and as unwelcome to a woman, as a looking-glaſs after the ſmall-pox.

Heart. I confeſs I have not been ſneering fulſom lies and nauſeous flattery, fawning upon a little tawdry whore that will fawn upon me again, and entertain any puppy that comes, like a tumbler, with the ſame tricks over and over. For ſuch I gueſs may have been your late employment.

Bell. Wou'd thou hadſt come a little ſooner! Vainlove would have wrought thy converſion, and been a champion for the cauſe.

Heart. What, has he been here? that's one of love's April fools, is always upon ſome errand that's to no purpoſe, ever embarking in adventures, yet never comes to harbour.

Sharp. That's becauſe he always ſets out in foul weather, loves to buffet with the winds, meet the tide, and ſail in the teeth of oppoſition.

Heart. What, has he not dropt anchor at Araminta?

Bell. Truth on't is, ſhe fits his temper beſt, is a kind of floating iſland; ſometimes ſeems in reach, then vaniſhes and keeps him buſied in the ſearch.

Sharp. She had need have a good ſhare of ſenſe, to manage ſo *capricious* a lover.

Bell. Faith I don't know: he's of a temper the moſt eaſy to himſelf in the world: he takes as much always of an amour as he cares for, and quits it when it grows ſtale or unpleaſant.

Sharp. An argument of very little paſſion, very good underſtanding, and very ill nature.

Heart. And proves that Vainlove plays the fool with discretion.

Sharp. You, Bellmour, are bound in gratitude to stickle for him; you with pleasure reap that fruit, which he takes pains to sow: he does the drudgery in the mine, and you stamp your image on the gold.

Bell. He's of another opinion, and says I do the drudgery in the mine. Well, we have each our share of sport, and each that which he likes best; 'tis his diversion to set, 'tis mine to cover the partridge.

Heart. And it should be mine to let 'em go again.

Sharp. Not till you had mouth'd a little, George, I think that's all thou art fit for now.

Heart. Good Mr Young Fellow, you're mistaken; as able as yourself, and as nimble too, tho' I mayn't have so much mercury in my limbs: 't's true indeed I don't force appetite, but wait the natural call of my lust, and think it time enough to be lewd, after I have had the temptation.

Bell. Time enough, ay too soon. I should rather have expected from a person of your gravity——

Heart. Yet it is oftentimes too late with some of you young, termagant flashy sinners—you have all the guilt of the intention, and none of the pleasure of the practice—'tis true you are so eager in pursuit of the temptation, that you save the devil the trouble of leading you into it: nor is it out of discretion, that you don't swallow that very hook yourselves have baited; but you are cloy'd with the preparative, and what you mean for a whet, turns the edge of your puny stomach. Your love is like your courage, which you shew for the first year or two upon all occasions, 'till in a little time, being disabled or disarmed, you abate of your vigour; and that daring blade, which was so often drawn, is bound to the peace for ever after.

Bell. Thou art an old furnicator of a singular good principle indeed! and are for encouraging youth, that they may be as wicked as thou art at thy years.

Heart. I am for having every body be what they pretend to be; a whoremaster be a whoremaster; and no',

like Vainlove, kiſs a lap-dog with paſſion, when it would diſguſt him from the lady's own lips.

Bell. That only happens ſometimes, where the dog has the ſweeter breath, for the more cleanly conveyance. But George, you muſt not quarrel with little gallantries of this nature: women are often won by 'em. Who would refuſe to kiſs a lap-dog if it were preliminary to the lips of his lady?

Sharp. Or omit playing with her fan, and cooling her if ſhe were hot, when it might intitle him to the office of warming her when ſhe ſhould be cold!

Bell. What is it to read a play in a rainy day? though you ſhould be now and then interrupted in a witty ſcene, and ſhe perhaps preſerve her laughter 'till the jeſt were over; even that may be born with, conſidering the reward in proſpect.

Heart. I confeſs you that are womens aſſes bear greater burdens: are forced to undergo dreſſing, dancing, ſinging, whining, rhyming, flattering, lying, grinning, cringing, and the drudgery of loving to boot.

Bell. O brute, the drudgery of loving!

Heart. Ay, why to come to love through all theſe incumbrances, is like coming to an eſtate overcharg'd with debts; which by the time you have paid, yields no further profit than what the bare tillage and manuring of the land will produce at the expence of your own ſweat.

Bell. Prithee, how doſt thou love?

Sharp. He! he hates the ſex.

Heart. So I hate phyſic too—yet I may love to take it for my health.

Bell. Well come off, George, if at any time you ſhould be taken ſtraying.

Sharp. He has need of ſuch an excuſe, conſidering the preſent ſtate of his body.

Heart. How d'ye mean?

Sharp. Why, if whoring be purging (as you call it), then, I may ſay, marriage is entering into a courſe of phyſic.

Bell. How, George, does the wind blow there?

Heart. It will as ſoon blow north-and-by-ſouth——

marry, quotha! I hope in heaven I have a greater portion of grace, and I think I have baited too many of those traps, to be caught in one myself.

Bell. Who the devil wou'd have thee? unless 'twere an oisterwoman, to propagate young fry for Billingsgate—thy talent will never recommend thee to any thing of better quality.

Heart. My talent is chiefly that of speaking truth, which I don't expect should ever recommend me to people of quality.——I thank Heav'n, I have very honestly purchas'd the hatred of all the great families in town.

Sharp. And you, in return of spleen, hate them: but could you hope to be receiv'd into the alliance of a noble family——

Heart. No, I hope I shall never merit that affliction—to be punish'd with a wife of birth——be a stag of the first head, and bear my horns aloft, like one of the supporters of my wife's coat. S'death! I would not be a cuckold to e'er an illustrious whore in England.

Bell. What, not make your family, man! and provide for your children?

Sharp. For her children, you mean.

Heart. Ay, there you've nick'd it—there's the devil upon devil—O the pride and joy of heart 'twould be to me, to have my son and heir resemble such a Duke—to have a fleering coxcomb scoff and cry, Master, your son's mighty like his Grace, has just his smile and air of's face. Then replies another—Methinks he has more of the Marquis of such a place, about his nose and eyes; though he has my Lord What-d'ye-call's mouth to a tittle—then, I, to put it off as unconcern'd, come chuck the infant under the chin, force a smile and cry, Ay, the boy takes after his mother's relations—when the devil and she knows, 'tis a little compound of the whole body of nobility.

Bell.
Sharp. } Ha, ha, ha!

Bell. Well but, George, I have one question to ask you——

Heart. Pshaw, I have prattled away my time—I hope

you are in no haſte for an anſwer—for I ſhan't ſtay now. [*Looking on his watch.*

Bell. Nay prithee, George.———

Heart. No, beſides my buſineſs, I ſee a fool coming this way. Adieu.

SCENE III.

SHARPER, BELLMOUR.

Bell. What does he mean? Oh, 'tis Sir Joſeph Wittoll, with his friend; but I ſee he has turn'd the corner, and goes another way.

Sharp. What in the name of wonder is it?

Bell. Why, a fool.

Sharp. 'Tis a tawdry outſide.

Bell. And a very beggarly lining——yet he may be worth your acquaintance—a little of thy chymiſtry, Tom, may extract gold from that dirt,

Sharp. Say you ſo? 'faith I am as poor as a chymiſt, and would be as induſtrious. But what was he that follow'd him? Is not he a dragon that watches thoſe golden pippins?

Bell. Hang him, no, he a dragon! if he be, 'tis a very peaceful one; I can inſure his anger dormant; or ſhould he ſeem to rouſe, 'tis but well laſhing him, and he will ſleep like a top.

Sharp. Ay, is he of that kidney?

Bell. Yet is ador'd by that bigot Sir Joſeph Wittoll, as the image of valour: he calls him his back, and indeed they are never aſunder—yet laſt night, I know not by what miſchance, the Knight was alone, and had fallen into the hands of ſome night-walkers, who, I ſuppoſe, would have pillaged him: but I chanc'd to come by, and reſcued him: though I believe he was heartily fright'ned, for as ſoon as ever he was looſe, he ran away, without ſtaying to ſee who had help'd him.

Sharp. Is that bully of his in the army?

Bell. No, but is a pretender, and wears the habit of a ſoldier; which now-a-days as often clokes cowardiſe, as a black gown does atheiſm.——You muſt know he has been abroad——went purely to run away from a

campaign; enrich'd himſelf with the plunder of a few oaths——and here vents 'em againſt the general, who ſlighting men of merit, and preferring only thoſe of intereſt, has made him quit the ſervice.

Sharp. Wherein, no doubt, he magnifies his own performance.

Bell. Speaks miracles, is the drum to his own praiſe——the only implement of a ſoldier he reſembles; like that, being full of bluſt'ring noiſe and emptineſs——

Sharp. And like that, of no uſe but to be beaten.

Bell. Right; but then the compariſon breaks, for he will take a drubbing with as little noiſe as a pulpit cuſhion.

Sharp. His name, and I have done?

Bell. Why, that, to paſs it current too, he has gilded with a title; he is called Captain Bluffe.

Sharp. Well, I'll endeavour his acquaintance—you ſteer another courſe; are bound,

For Love's iſland: I for the golden coaſt.
May each ſucceed in what he wiſhes moſt. [*Exeunt.*

ACT II. SCENE I.

Sir JOSEPH WITTOLL, SHARPER *following.*

SHARPER.

SURE that's he, and alone.

Sir Jo. Um——Ay, this, this is the very damn'd place; the inhuman cannibals, the bloody-minded villains would have butcher'd me laſt night: no doubt, they would have flea'd me alive, have ſold my ſkin, and devoured, *&c.*

Sharp. How's this!

Sir Jo. An it hadn't been for a civil gentleman as came by, and frighted 'em away——but, agad, I durſt not ſtay to give him thanks.

Sharp. This muſt be Bellmour he means.——Ha! I have a thought——

Sir Jo. Zook, 'would the Captain were come; the

very remembrance makes me quake; agad, I ſhall never be reconciled to this place heartily.

Sharp. 'Tis but trying, and being where I am at worſt. Now luck!——Curs'd Fortune! this muſt be the place, this damn'd unlucky place———

Sir Jo. Agad, and ſo 'tis—Why, here has been more miſchief done, I perceive.

Sharp. No, 'tis gone, 'tis loſt——ten thouſand devils on that chance which drew me hither; ay, here, juſt here, this ſpot to me is hell; nothing to be found, but the deſpair of what I've loſt. [*Looking about as in ſearch.*

Sir Jo. Poor gentleman——by the Lord Harry, I'll ſtay no longer, for I have found too———

Sharp. Ha! who's that has found? What have you found? reſtore it quickly, or by———

Sir Jo. Not I, Sir, not I, as I've a ſoul to be ſav'd, I have found nothing but what has been to my loſs, as I may ſay, and as you were ſaying, Sir.

Sharp. O your ſervant, Sir, you are ſafe then it ſeems; 'tis an ill wind that blows nobody good: well, you may rejoice over my ill fortune, ſince it paid the price of your ranſom.

Sir Jo. I rejoice! agad, not I, Sir; I'm very ſorry for your loſs, with all my heart, blood, and guts, Sir; and if you did but know me, you'd ne'er ſay I were ſo ill-natur'd.

Sharp. Know you! why, can you be ſo ungrateful to forget me!

Sir Jo. O Lord, forget him! No, no, Sir, I don't forget you——becauſe I never ſaw your face before, agad. Ha, ha, ha!

Sharp. How! [*Angrily.*

Sir Jo. Stay, ſtay, Sir, let me recollect.——He's a damn'd angry fellow——I believe I had better remember him, till I can get out of his ſight; but out o'ſight out o'mind, a'gad. [*Aſide.*

Sharp. Methought the ſervice I did you laſt night, Sir, in preſerving you from thoſe ruffians, might have taken better root in your ſhallow memory.

Sir Jo. Gads-daggers-belts-blades and ſcabbards, this is the very gentleman! How ſhall I make him a return

ſuitable to the greatneſs of his merit——I had a pretty thing to that purpoſe, if he ha'n't frighted it out of my memory.——Hem! hem! Sir, I moſt ſubmiſſively implore your pardon for my tranſgreſſion of ingratitude and omiſſion; having my entire dependence, Sir, upon the ſuperfluity of your goodneſs, which like an inundation will, I hope, totally immerge the recollection of my error, and leave me floating in your ſight, upon the full-blown bladders of repentance——by the help of which, I ſhall once more hope to ſwim into your favour.

[*Bows.*

Sharp. So-h! O Sir, I am eaſily pacified; the acknowledgment of a gentleman———

Sir Jo. Acknowledgment! Sir, I am all over acknowledgment, and will not ſtick to ſhew it in the greateſt extremity, by night or by day, in ſickneſs or in health, winter or ſummer; all ſeaſons and occaſions ſhall teſtify the reality and gratitude of your ſuperabundant humble ſervant, Sir Joſeph Wittoll knight. Hem, hem!

Sharp. Sir Joſeph Wittoll!

Sir Jo. The ſame, Sir, of Wittollhall in Comitatu Bucks.

Sharp. Is it poſſible! Then I am happy to have obliged the mirror of knighthood and pink of courteſy in the age: let me embrace you.

Sir Jo. O Lord, Sir.

Sharp. My loſs, Sir, I eſteem as a trifle repaid with intereſt, ſince it has purchas'd me the friendſhip and acquaintance of the perſon in the world whoſe character I admire.

Sir Jo. You are only pleas'd to ſay ſo, Sir.——But pray, if I may be ſo bold, what is that loſs you mention'd?

Sharp. O, term it no longer ſo, Sir. In the ſcuffle, laſt night, I only dropp'd a bill of a hundred pound, which, I confeſs, I came half deſpairing to recover; but thanks to my better fortune———

Sir Jo. You have found it, Sir, then, it ſeems; I profeſs I'm heartily glad———

Sharp. Sir, your humble ſervant——I don't queſtion but you are; that you have ſo cheap an opportunity

of expreſſing your gratitude and generoſity. Since the paying ſo trivial a ſum, will wholly acquit you, and doubly engage me.

Sir Jo. What a dickens does he mean by a trivial ſum? [*aſide.*] But ha'n't you found it, Sir?

Sharp. No otherwiſe, I vow to Gad, but in my hopes in you, Sir.

Sir Jo. Humh.

Sharp. But that's ſufficient——'Twere injuſtice to doubt the honour of Sir Joſeph Wittoll.

Sir Jo. O Lord, Sir.

Sharp. You are above (I'm ſure) a thought ſo low, to ſuffer me to loſe what was ventur'd in your ſervice: nay, 'twas in a manner——paid down for your deliverance; 'twas ſo much lent you——And you ſcorn, I'll ſay that for you——

Sir Jo. Nay, I'll ſay that for myſelf, (with your leave, Sir), I do ſcorn a dirty thing. But, agad, I'm a little out of pocket at preſent.

Sharp. P'ſhaw, you can't want a hundred pound. Your word is ſufficient any where: 'tis but borrowing ſo much dirt, you have large acres, and can ſoon repay it.——Money is but dirt, Sir Joſeph—mere dirt.

Sir Jo. But I profeſs 'tis a dirt I have waſhed my hands of at preſent; I have laid it all out upon my back.

Sharp. Are you ſo extravagant in clothes, Sir Joſeph?

Sir Jo. Ha, ha, ha! a very good jeſt, I profeſs; ha, ha, ha! a very good jeſt, and I did not know that I had ſaid it, and that's a better jeſt than t'other. 'Tis a ſign you and I ha'n't been long acquainted; you have loſt a good jeſt for want of knowing me——I only mean a friend of mine whom I call my back; he ſticks as cloſe to me, and follows me through all dangers——he is indeed back, breaſt, and headpiece, as it were, to me. Agad, he's a brave fellow——Pauh, I am quite another thing when I am with him: I don't fear the devil (bleſs us!), almoſt if he be by. Ah—had he been with me laſt night——

Sharp. If he had, Sir, what then? he could have

done no more, nor perhaps have ſuffer'd ſo much—had he a hundred pound to loſe? [*Angrily.*

Sir Jo. O Lord, Sir, by no means; (but I might have ſav'd a hundred pound), I meant innocently, as I hope to be ſav'd, Sir, (a damn'd hot fellow!), only as I was ſaying, I let him have all my ready money to redeem his great ſword from limbo.—But, Sir, I have a letter of credit to Alderman Fondlewife, as far as two hundred pound, and this afternoon you ſhall ſee I am a perſon, ſuch a one as you would wiſh to have met with——

Sharp. That you are, I'll be ſworn. [*Aſide.*] Why, that's great, and like yourſelf.

SCENE II.

To them Captain BLUFFE.

Sir Jo. O, here a'comes.——Ay, my Hector of Troy, welcome, my bully, my back; agad, my heart has gone a pit-pat for thee.

Bluffe. How now, my young knight? Not for fear, I hope; he that knows me muſt be a ſtranger to fear.

Sir Jo. Nay, agad, I hate fear ever ſince I had like to have dy'd of a fright——But——

Bluffe. But! Look you here, boy, here's your antidote, here's your Jeſuit's powder for a ſhaking fit.——But who haſt thou got with thee? is he of mettle? [*Laying his hand upon his ſword.*

Sir Jo. Ay, bully, a deviliſh ſmart fellow: 'a will fight like a cock.

Bluffe. Say you ſo? then I honour him.——But has he been abroad? for every cock will fight upon his own dunghill.

Sir Jo. I don't know, but I'll preſent you——

Bluff. I'll recommend myſelf.——Sir, I honour you; I underſtand you love fighting; I reverence a man that loves fighting; Sir, I kiſs your hilts.

Sharp. Sir, your ſervant, but you are miſinform'd; for unleſs it be to ſerve my particular friend, as Sir Joſeph here, my country, or my religion, or in ſome very juſtifiable cauſe, I'm not for it.

Bluffe. O Lord, I beg your pardon, Sir, I find you are not of my palate, you can't reliſh a diſh of fighting without ſweet ſauce. Now I think—fighting for fighting ſake's ſufficient cauſe; fighting, to me's religion and the laws.

Sir Jo. Ah, well ſaid my hero: was not that great, Sir? by the Lord Harry, he ſays true, fighting is meat, drink and cloth to him. But back, this gentleman is one of the beſt friends I have in the world, and ſaved my life laſt night—you know I told you.

Bluffe. Ay! then I honour him again——Sir, may I crave your name?

Sharp. Ah, Sir, my name's Sharper.

Sir Jo. Pray, Mr Sharper, embrace my back—very well—by the Lord Harry, Mr Sharper, he's as brave a fellow as Cannibal; are not you, bully back?

Sharp. Hannibal, I believe you mean, Sir Joſeph.

Bluffe. Undoubtedly he did, Sir: faith, Hannibal was a very pretty fellow—but, Sir Joſeph, compariſons are odious——Hannibal was a very pretty fellow in thoſe days, it muſt be granted—but alas, Sir! were he alive now, he would be nothing, nothing in the earth.

Sharp. How, Sir! I make a doubt, if there be at this day a greater general breathing.

Bluffe. Oh excuſe me, Sir; have you ſerv'd abroad, Sir?

Sharp. Not I really, Sir.

Bluffe. Oh, I thought ſo—Why then you can know nothing, Sir; I am afraid you ſcarce know the hiſtory of the late war in Flanders, with all its particulars.

Sharp. Not I, Sir, no more than public letters, or Gazettes tell us.

Bluffe. Gazettes! Why there again now—Why, Sir, there are not three words of truth, the year round, put into the Gazette—I'll tell you a ſtrange thing now as to that—you muſt know, Sir, I was reſident in Flanders the laſt campaign; had a ſmall poſt there, but no matter for that—Perhaps, Sir, there was ſcarce any thing of moment done but an humble ſervant of yours, that ſhall be nameleſs, was an eye-witneſs of—I won't ſay had the greateſt ſhare in't. Tho' I might ſay that too, ſince

I name no body you know—Well, Mr Sharper, would you think it? In all this time—as I hope for a truncheon—this raſcally Gazette-writer never ſo much as once mention'd me—not once, by the wars—took no more notice, than as if Nol. Bluffe had not been in the land of the living.

Sharp. Strange!

Sir Jo. Yet, by the Lord Harry, 'tis true, Mr Sharper, for I went every day to coffeehouſes to read the Gazette myſelf.

Bluffe. Ay, ay, no matter—You ſee, Mr Sharper, after all I am content to retire—live a private perſon—Scipio and others have done it.

Sharp. Impudent rogue! [*Aſide.*

Sir Jo. Ay, this damn'd modeſty of yours—agad if he would put in for't he might be made general himſelf yet.

Bluffe. Oh fy, no, Sir Joſeph—you know I hate this.

Sir Jo. Let me but tell Mr Sharper a little, how you ate fire once out of the mouth of a cannon—agad he did; thoſe impenetrable whiſkers of his have confronted flames———

Bluffe. Death, what do you mean, Sir Joſeph?

Sir Jo. Look you now, I tell you he's ſo modeſt he'll own nothing.

Bluffe. Piſh! you have put me out, I have forgot what I was about. Pray hold your tongue, and give me leave. [*Angrily.*

Sir Jo. I am dumb.

Bluffe. This ſword, I think, I was telling you of, Mr Sharper—this ſword I'll maintain to be the beſt divine, anatomiſt, lawyer or caſuiſt in Europe; it ſhall decide a controverſy or ſplit a cauſe———

Sir Jo. Nay, now I muſt ſpeak; it will ſplit a hair, by the Lord Harry, I have ſeen it.

Bluffe. Zouns, Sir, it's a lie; you have not ſeen it, nor ſhan't ſee it: Sir, I ſay you can't ſee; what d'ye ſay to that now?

Sir Jo. I am blind.

Bluffe. Death! had any other man interrupted me—

Sir Jo. Good Mr Sharper, ſpeak to him; I dare not look that way.

Sharp. Captain, Sir Joſeph's penitent.

Bluffe. O I am calm, Sir, calm as a diſcharged culverin—but 'twas indiſcreet, when you know what will provoke me—nay come, Sir Joſeph, you know my heat's ſoon over.

Sir Jo. Well, I am a fool ſometimes—but I'm ſorry.

Bluffe. Enough.

Sir Jo. Come, we'll go take a glaſs to drown animoſities; Mr Sharper, will you partake?

Sharp. I wait on you, Sir: nay pray, captain—You are Sir Joſeph's back.

SCENE III.

ARAMINTA, BELINDA, BETTY *waiting in* Araminta's *Apartment.*

Belin. Ah! Nay, dear—pr'ythee good, dear ſweet Couſin, no more; oh Gad, I ſwear you'd make one ſick to hear you.

Aram. Bleſs me! what have I ſaid to move you thus?

Belin. O you have raved, talked idly, and all in commendation of that filthy, awkward, two legg'd creature, man—you don't know what you've ſaid, your fever has tranſported you.

Aram. If love be the fever which you mean, kind Heav'n avert the cure: let me have oil to feed that flame, and never let it be extinct, 'till I myſelf am aſhes.

Belin. There was a whine!——O Gad, I hate your horrid fancy—This love is the devil, and ſure to be in love is to be poſſeſs'd—'Tis in the head, the heart, the blood, the—all over—O Gad, you are quite ſpoil'd—I ſhall lothe the ſight of mankind for your ſake.

Aram. Fy, this is groſs affectation—a little of Bellmour's company would change the ſcene.

Belin. Filthy fellow! I wonder, Couſin———

Aram. I wonder, Couſin, you ſhould imagine I don't perceive you love him.

Belin. Oh, I love your hideous fancy! Ha, ha, ha! love a man!

Aram. Love a man! yes, you would not love a beaſt?

Belin. Of all beaſts not an aſs—which is ſo like your Vainlove—Lard, I have ſeen an aſs look ſo chagrin, Ha, ha, ha! (you muſt pardon me, I can't help laughing), that an abſolute lover would have concluded the poor creature to have had darts, and flames, and altars, and all that in his breaſt. Araminta, come I'll talk ſeriouſly to you now; could you but ſee with my eyes, the buffoonry of one ſcene of addreſs, a lover ſet out with all his equipage and appurtenances; O Gad! ſure you would—but you play the game, and conſequently can't ſee the miſcarriages obvious to every ſtander by.

Aram. Yes, yes, I can ſee ſomething near it, when you and Bellmour meet. You don't know that you dreamt of Bellmour laſt night, and call'd him aloud in your ſleep.

Belin. Piſh, I can't help dreaming of the devil ſometimes; would you from thence infer I love him?

Aram. But that's not all; you caught me in your arms when you named him, and preſs'd me to your boſom—ſure, if I had not pinch'd you 'till you wak'd, you had ſtifled me with kiſſes.

Belin. O barbarous aſperſion!

Aram. No aſperſion, Couſin, we are alone——Nay I can tell you more.

Belin. I deny it all.

Aram. What, before you hear it?

Belin. My denial is premeditated like your malice—Lard, Couſin, you talk odly—whatever the matter is. O' my ſoul, I'm afraid you'll follow evil courſes.

Aram. Ha, ha, ha! this is pleaſant.

Belin. You may laugh, but——

Aram. Ha, ha, ha!

Belin. You think the malicious grin becomes you—The devil take Bellmour—Why do you tell me of him?

Aram. Oh, is it come out—now you are angry, I am ſure you love him. I tell no body elſe, Couſin—I have not betray'd you yet.

Belin. Pr'ythee tell it all the world; it's falſe.

Aram. Come then, kiſs and friends.

Belin. Piſh.

Aram. Pr'ythee don't be ſo peeviſh.

Belin. Pr'ythee don't be ſo impertinent. Betty.

Aram. Ha, ha, ha!

Betty. Did your Ladyſhip call, Madam?

Belin. Get my hoods and tippet, and bid the footman call a chair.

Aram. I hope you are not going out in dudgeon, Couſin.

SCENE IV.

To them FOOTMAN.

Foot. Madam, there are——

Belin. Is there a chair?

Foot. No, Madam, there are Mr Bellmour and Mr Vainlove to wait upon your Ladyſhip.

Aram. Are they below?

Foot. No, Madam, they ſent before, to know if you were at home.

Belin. The viſit's to you, Couſin, I ſuppoſe I am at my liberty.

Aram. Be ready to ſhew 'em up.

SCENE V.

To them BETTY *with hoods and looking-glaſs.*

I can't tell, Couſin, I believe we are equally concern'd; but if you continue your humour, it won't be very entertaining—(I know ſhe'd fain be perſuaded to ſtay.) [*Aſide.*

Belin. I ſhall oblige you, in leaving you to the full and free enjoyment of that converſation you admire. Let me ſee; hold the glaſs—Lard, I look wretchedly to-day!

Aram. Betty, why don't you help my couſin?

[*Putting on her hoods.*

Belin. Hold off your fiſts, and ſee that he gets a chair with a high roof, or a very low ſeat—ſtay, come back here you Mrs Fidget—you are ſo ready to go to the

footman—here, take 'em all again, my mind's chang'd, I won't go.

SCENE VI.

ARAMINTA, BELINDA.

So, this I expected—you won't oblige me then, Couſin, and let me have all the company to myſelf.

Belin. No; upon deliberation, I have too much charity to truſt you to yourſelf. The devil watches all opportunities; and in this favourable diſpoſition of your mind, heav'n knows how far you may be tempted: I am tender of your reputation.

Aram. I am oblig'd to you——But who's malicious now, Belinda?

Belin. Not I; witneſs my heart, I ſtay out of pure affection.

Aram. In my conſcience I believe you.

SCENE VII.

To them VAINLOVE, BELLMOUR, FOOTMAN.

Bell. So, fortune be prais'd! to find you both within, Ladies, is———

Aram. No miracle, I hope.

Bell. Not o'your ſide, Madam, I confeſs——But my tyrant there and I, are two buckets that can never come together.

Belin. Nor are ever like—yet we often meet and claſh.

Bell. How, never like! marry, Hymen forbid. But this is to run ſo extravagantly in debt; I have laid out ſuch a world of love in your ſervice, that you think you can never be able to pay me all: ſo ſhun me, for the ſame reaſon that you would a dun.

Belin. Ah, on my conſcience, and the moſt impertinent and troubleſome of duns—a dun for money will be quiet, when he ſees his debtor has not wherewithal——but a dun for love is an eternal torment that never reſts———

Bell. 'Till he has created love where there was none,

and then gets it for his pains. For importunity in love, like importunity at court, first creates its own interest, and pursues it for the favour.

Aram. Favours that are got by impudence and importunity, are like discoveries from the rack, when the afflicted person, for his ease, sometimes confesses secrets his heart knows nothing of.

Vain. I should rather think favours, so gain'd, to be due rewards to indefatigable devotion——For as love is a deity, he must be serv'd by prayer.

Belin. O Gad, would you would all pray to Love then, and let us alone.

Vain. You are the temples of love, and 'tis through you our devotion must be convey'd.

Aram. Rather poor silly idols of your own making, which, upon the least displeasure, you forsake, and set up new——Every man, now, changes his mistress and his religion, as his humour varies or his interest.

Vain. O Madam———

Aram. Nay come, I find we are growing serious, and then we are in great danger of being dull—If my music-master be not gone, I'll entertain you with a new song, which comes pretty near my own opinion of love and your sex—who's there? is Mr Gavot gone? [*Calls.*

Foot. Only to the next door, Madam; I'll call him.

SCENE VIII.

ARAMINTA, BELINDA, VAINLOVE, *and* BELLMOUR.

Bell. Why, you won't hear me with patience.

Aram. What's the matter, Cousin?

Bell. Nothing, Madam, only———

Belin. Pr'ythee hold thy tongue——Lard, he has so pester'd me with flames and stuff———I think I shan't endure the sight of a fire this twelvemonth.

Bell. Yet all can't melt that cruel frozen heart.

Belin. O Gad, I hate your hideous fancy—you said that once before—if you must talk impertinently, for Heaven's sake let it be with variety; don't come always, like the devil, wrapt in flames—I'll not hear a sentence more, that begins with an *I burn*—Or an, *I beseech you, Madam.*

Bell. But tell me how you would be ador'd—I am very tractable.

Belin. Then know, I would be ador'd in silence.

Bell. Humph, I thought so, that you might have all the talk to yourself—you had better let me speak; for if my thoughts fly to any pitch, I shall make villainous signs.

Belin. What will you get by that? to make such signs as I won't understand.

Bell. Ay, but if I'm tongue-ty'd, I must have all my actions free to——Quicken your apprehension—and I gad let me tell you, my most prevailing argument is express'd in dumb shew.

SCENE IX.

To them MUSIC-MASTER.

Aram. O, I am glad we shall have a song to divert the discourse——Pray oblige us with the last new song.

SONG.

I.

Thus to a ripe consenting maid,
Poor, old, repenting Delia said,
Would you long preserve your lover?
Would you still his goddess reign?
Never let him all discover,
Never let him much obtain.

II.

Men will admire, adore and die,
While wishing at your feet they ly:
But admitting their embraces,
Wakes 'em from the golden dream;
Nothing new besides our faces,
Every woman is the same.

Aram. So, how do'e like the song, Gentlemen?

Bell. O very well perform'd—but I don't much admire the words.

Aram. I expected it—there's too much truth in 'em. If Mr Gavot will walk with us in the garden, we'll have it once again—you may like it better at second hearing. You'll bring my cousin.

Bell. Faith, Madam, I dare not ſpeak to her, but I'll make ſigns. [*Addreſſes* Belinda *in dumb ſhew.*

Belin. O foh, your dumb rhetorick is more ridiculous than your talking impertinence; as an ape is a much more troubleſome animal than a parrot.

Aram. Ay, Couſin, and 'tis a ſign the creatures mimick Nature well; for there are few men but do more ſilly things than they ſay.

Bell. Well, I find my apiſhneſs has paid the ranſom for my ſpeech, and ſet it at liberty—though I confeſs, I could be well enough pleas'd to drive on a love bargain, in that ſilent manner—'twould ſave a man a world of lying and ſwearing at the year's end. Beſides, I have had a little experience, that brings to mind,

When Wit and Reaſon both have fail'd to move;
Kind looks and actions (from ſucceſs) do prove,
E'en Silence may be eloquent in love.

ACT III. SCENE I.

The Street.

SILVIA *and* LUCY.

SILVIA.

WILL he not come then?

Lucy. Yes, yes, come, I warrant him, if you will go in and be ready to receive him.

Silv. Why did you not tell me?—whom mean you?

Lucy. Whom you ſhould mean, Heartwell.

Silv. Senſeleſs creature, I mean my Vainlove.

Lucy. You may as ſoon hope to recover your own maidenhead as his love. Therefore e'en ſet your heart at reſt; and in the name of Opportunity mind your own buſineſs. Strike Heartwell home before the bait's worn off the hook. Age will come. He nibbled fairly yeſterday, and no doubt will be eager enough to-day to ſwallow the temptation.

Silv. Well, ſince there's no remedy—yet tell me——for I wou'd know, though to the anguiſh of my ſoul; how did he refuſe? tell me——how did he receive my letter, in anger or in ſcorn?

Lucy. Neither; but what was ten times worſe, with damn'd, ſenſeleſs indifference. By this light I could have ſpit in his face—receive it! why, he receiv'd it, as I would one of your lovers that ſhould come empty-handed; as a court lord does his mercer's bill, or a begging dedication—he receiv'd it, as if't had been a letter from his wife.

Silv. What, did he not read it?

Lucy. Hum'd it over, gave you his reſpects, and ſaid, he would take time to peruſe it—but then he was in haſte.

Silv. Reſpects, and peruſe it! he's gone, and Araminta has bewitch'd him from me—Oh how the name of rival fires my blood!—I could curſe 'em both; eternal jealouſy attend her love, and diſappointment meet his! Oh that I could revenge the torment he has caus'd! —Methinks I feel the woman ſtrong within me, and vengeance kindles in the room of love.

Lucy. I have that in my head may make miſchief.

Silv. How, dear Lucy?

Lucy. You know Araminta's diſſembled coyneſs has won, and keeps him hers.———

Silv. Cou'd we perſuade him that ſhe loves another—

Lucy. No, you're out; could we perſuade him, that ſhe dotes on him, himſelf——contrive a kind letter as from her, 'twould diſguſt his nicety, and take away his ſtomach.

Silv. Impoſſible, 'twill never take.

Lucy. Trouble not your head. Let me alone—I will inform myſelf of what paſt between 'em to-day, and about it ſtraight.—Hold, I'm miſtaken, or that's Heartwell, who ſtands talking at the corner—'tis he—go, get you in, Madam, receive him pleaſantly, dreſs up your face in innocence and ſmiles, and diſſemble the very want of diſſimulation—you know what will take him.

Silv. 'Tis as hard to counterfeit love, as it is to conceal it: but I'll do my weak endeavour, though I fear I have no art.

Lucy. Hang art, Madam, and truſt to Nature for diſſembling.

Man was by Nature woman's cully made:
We never are but by ourſelves betray'd.

SCENE II.

HEARTWELL, VAINLOVE *and* BELLMOUR *following.*

Bell. Hiſt, hiſt, is not that Heartwell going to Silvia?

Vain. He's talking to himſelf, I think; prithee let's try if we can hear him.

Heart. Why, whither in the devil's name am I going now? Hum——let me think——is not this Silvia's houſe, the cave of that Enchantreſs, and which conſequently I ought to ſhun as I would infection? to enter here, is to put on the envenom'd ſhirt, to run into the embraces of a fever, and in ſome raving fit, be led to plunge myſelf into that more conſuming fire, a woman's arms. Ha! well recollected, I will recover my reaſon, and be gone.

Bell. Now Venus forbid!

Vain. Huſh——

Heart. Well, why do you not move? feet, do your office—not one inch; no, foregad I'm caught——there ſtands my north, and thither my needle points——now could I curſe myſelf, yet cannot repent. O thou delicious, damn'd, dear, deſtructive woman! 'Sdeath, how the young fellows will hoot me! I ſhall be the jeſt of the town. Nay, in two days, I expect to be chronicled in ditty, and ſung in woeful ballad, to the tune of the ſuperannuated maiden's comfort, or the Bachelor's fall; and upon the third, I ſhall be hang'd in effigy, poſted up for the exemplary ornament of neceſſary houſes, and coblers ſtalls.—Death, I can't think on't—I'll run into the danger, to loſe the apprehenſion.

SCENE III.

BELLMOUR, VAINLOVE.

Bell. A very certain remedy, *probatum eſt*—Ha, ha, ha! poor George, thou art i'th' right, thou haſt ſold thyſelf to laughter; the ill-natur'd town will find the jeſt juſt where thou haſt loſt it. Ha, ha, how a' ſtruggled, like an old lawyer between two fees.

Vain. Or a young wench, between pleaſure and reputation.

Bell. Or as you did to-day, when half afraid you ſnatch'd a kiſs from Araminta.

Vain. She has made a quarrel on't.

Bell. Pauh, women are only angry at ſuch offences, to have the pleaſure of forgiving 'em.

Vain. And I love to have the pleaſure of making my peace—I ſhould not eſteem a pardon if too eaſily won.

Bell. Thou doſt not know what thou wouldſt be at: whether thou wouldſt have her angry or pleas'd. Could'ſt thou be content to marry Araminta?

Vain. Could you be content to go to Heav'n?

Bell. Hum, not immediately, in my conſcience, not heartily? I'd do a little more good in my generation firſt, in order to deſerve it.

Vain. Nor I to marry Araminta 'till I merit her.

Bell. But how the devil doſt thou expect to get her if ſhe never yield?

Vain. That's true, but I would——

Bell. Marry her without her conſent: thou'rt a riddle beyond woman———

SCENE IV.

To them SETTER.

Truſty Setter, what tidings? how goes the project?

Setter. As all lewd projects do, Sir, where the devil prevents our endeavours with ſucceſs.

Bell. A good hearing, Setter.

Vain. Well, I'll leave you with your engineer.

Bell. And haſt thou provided neceſſaries?

Setter. All, all, Sir; the large ſanctified hat, and the little preciſe band, with a ſwinging long ſpiritual cloke, to cover carnal knavery——not forgetting the black patch, which *Tribulation Spintext* wears, as I'm inform'd, upon one eye, as a penal mourning for the ogling offences of his youth; and ſome ſay, with that eye he firſt diſcover'd the frailty of his wife.

Bell. Well, in this fanatic father's habit will I confeſs Lætitia.

Setter. Rather prepare her for confeſſion, Sir, by helping her to ſin.

Bell. Be at your master's lodging, in the evening, I shall use the robes.

SCENE V.

SETTER *alone.*

Setter. I shall, Sir—I wonder to which of these two gentlemen I do most properly appertain—the one uses me as his attendant; the other (being the better acquainted with my parts) employs me as a pimp; why, that's much the more honourable employment—by all means——I follow one as my master, t'other follows me as his conductor.

SCENE VI.

To him LUCY.

Lucy. There's the hang-dog his man—I had a power over him in the reign of my mistress; but he is too true a valet de chamber not to affect his master's faults; and consequently is revolted from his allegiance.

Setter. Undoubtedly 'tis impossible to be a pimp and not a man of part; that is, without being politic, diligent, secret, wary, and so forth—And to all this valiant as Hercules—That is, passively valiant, and actively obedient. Ah, Setter! what a treasure is here lost for want of being known!

Lucy. Here's some villainy a-foot, he's so thoughtful; may be I may discover something in my mask—Worthy Sir, a word with you. [*Puts on her mask.*

Setter. Why, if I were known, I might come to be a great man———

Lucy. Not to interrupt your meditation———

Setter. And I should not be the first that has procur'd his greatness by pimping.

Lucy. Now poverty and the pox light upon thee, for a contemplative pimp.

Setter. Ha, what art thou who thus maliciously hast awaken'd me from my dream of glory? speak, thou vile disturber———

Lucy. Of thy most vile cogitations—thou poor, conceited wretch, how wert thou valuing thyself, upon thy

maſter's employment? for he's the head pimp to Mr Bellmour.

Setter. Good words, Damſel, or I ſhall——but how doſt thou know my maſter or me?

Lucy. Yes, I know both maſter and man to be——

Setter. To be men perhaps; nay, 'faith like enough, I often march in the rear of my maſter, and enter the breaches which he has made.

Lucy. Ay, the breach of faith, which he has begun: thou traitor to thy lawful princeſs.

Setter. Why, how now! prithee who art? lay by that worldly face, and produce your natural vizor.

Lucy. No, Sirrah, I'll keep it on to abuſe thee, and leave thee without hopes of revenge.

Setter. Oh! I begin to ſmoke ye: thou art ſome forſaken Abigail, we have dallied heretofore—and art come to tickle thy imagination with remembrance of iniquity paſt.

Lucy. No, thou pitiful flatterer of thy maſter's imperfections; thou maukin made up of the ſhreds and parings of his ſuperfluous fopperies.

Setter. Thou art thy miſtreſs's foul ſelf, compoſed of her ſullied iniquities and clothing.

Lucy. Hang thee——beggar's cur——Thy maſter is but a mumper in love; lyes canting at the gate, but never dares preſume to enter the houſe.

Setter. Thou art the wicket to thy miſtreſs's gate, to be opened for all comers. In fine, thou art the high road to thy miſtreſs.

Lucy. Beaſt, filthy toad, I can hold no longer; look and tremble. [*Unmaſks.*

Setter. How, Mrs Lucy!

Lucy. I wonder thou haſt the impudence to look me in the face.

Setter. Adſbud, who is in fault, miſtreſs of mine? who ſung the firſt ſtone? who undervalued my function? and who the devil could know you by inſtinct?

Lucy. You could know my office by inſtinct, and be hang'd, which you have ſlander'd moſt abominably. It vexes me not what you ſaid of my perſon; but that my

innocent calling ſhould be expos'd and ſcandaliz'd—— I cannot bear it.

Setter. Nay, faith, Lucy, I'm ſorry, I'll own myſelf to blame, though we were both in fault as to our offices ——Come, I'll make you any reparation.

Lucy. Swear.

Setter. I do ſwear to the utmoſt of my power.

Lucy. To be brief then: what is the reaſon your maſter did not appear to-day according to the ſummons I brought him?

Setter. To anſwer you as briefly—He has a cauſe to be tried in another court.

Lucy. Come tell me in plain terms how forward he is with Araminta.

Setter. Too forward to be turn'd back——Though he's a little in diſgrace at preſent about a kiſs which he forced. You and I can kiſs, Lucy, without all that.

Lucy. Stand off——He's a precious jewel!

Setter. And therefore you'd have him to ſet in your lady's locket.

Lucy. Where is he now?

Setter. He'll be in the piazza preſently.

Lucy. Remember to-day's behaviour——Let me ſee you with a penitent face.

Setter. What, no token of amity, Lucy? You and I don't uſe to part with dry lips.

Lucy. No, no, avaunt ——I'll not be ſlabber'd and kiſs'd now—— I'm not i' th' humour.

Setter. I'll not quit you ſo——I'll follow and put you into the humour.

SCENE VII.

Sir JOSEPH WITTOLL, BLUFFE.

Bluffe. And ſo, out of your unwonted generoſity——

Sir Jo. And good-nature, back; I am good-natur'd, and I can't help it.

Bluffe. You have given him a note upon Fondlewife for a hundred pound?

Sir Jo. Ay, ay, poor fellow, he ventur'd fair for't.

Bluffe. You have diſoblig'd me in it—for I have oc-

caſion for the money, and if you would look me in the face again and live, go, and force him to redeliver you the note——go——and bring it me hither. I'll ſtay here for you.

Sir Jo. You may ſtay 'till the day of judgment then, by the Lord Harry. I know better things than to be run thro' the guts for a hundred pound.—Why, I gave that hundred pound for being ſaved, an d'ye think, an there were no danger, I'll be ſo ungrateful to take it from the gentleman again?

Bluffe. Well, go to him from me——Tell him, I ſay, he muſt refund——or bilbo's the word, and ſlaughter will enſue——if he refuſe, tell him——but whiſper that ——tell him——I'll pink his ſoul——but whiſper that ſoftly to him.

Sir Jo. So ſoftly, that he ſhall never hear on't, I warrant you.—Why, what a devil's the matter, bully, are you mad? or d'ye think I'm mad? Agad, for my part, I don't love to be the meſſenger of ill news; 'tis an ungrateful office——ſo tell him yourſelf.

Bluffe. By theſe hilts, I believe he's fright'ned you into this compoſition: I believe you gave it him out of fear, pure paltry fear——Confeſs.

Sir Jo. No, no, hang't, I was not afraid neither—— tho' I confeſs he did in a manner ſnap me up——yet I can't ſay that it was altogether out of fear, but partly to prevent miſchief——for he was a deviliſh choleric fellow; and if my choler had been up too, agad, there would have been miſchief done, that's flat: and yet I believe if you had been by, I would as ſoon have let him a'had a hundred of my teeth. Adſheart, if he ſhould come juſt now when I'm angry, I'd tell him ——Mum.

SCENE VIII.

To them BELLMOUR, SHARPER.

Bell. Thou'rt a lucky rogue; there's your benefactor, you ought to return him thanks now you have receiv'd the favour.

Sharp. Sir Joſeph—your note was accepted, and the money paid at ſight: I'm come to return my thanks—

Sir Jo. They won't be accepted ſo readily as the bill, Sir.

Bell. I doubt the knight repents, Tom.——He looks like the knight of the ſorrowful face.

Sharp. This is a double generoſity—Do me a kindneſs, and refuſe my thanks!——But I hope you are not offended that I offer'd 'em?

Sir Jo. May be I am, Sir, may be I am not, Sir, may be I am both, Sir; what then? I hope I may be offended, without any offence to you, Sir.

Sharp. Heyday! Captain, what's the matter? You can tell.

Bluffe. Mr Sharper, the matter is plain——Sir Joſeph has found out your trick, and does not care to be put upon, being a man of honour.

Sharp. Trick, Sir?

Sir Jo. Ay, trick, Sir! and won't be put upon, Sir, being a man of honour, Sir, and ſo, Sir———

Sharp. Harkee, Sir Joſeph, a word with ye——in conſideration of ſome favours lately received, I would not have you draw yourſelf into a premunire, by truſting to that ſign of a man there—that pot-gun charged with wind.

Sir Jo. O Lord, O Lord, Captain, come juſtify yourſelf——I'll give him the lie, if you'll ſtand to it.

Sharp. Nay then, I'll be beforehand with you; take that——oafe. [*Cuffs him.*

Sir Jo. Captain, will you ſee this? Won't you pink his ſoul?

Bluffe. Huſht, 'tis not ſo convenient now——I ſhall find a time.

Sharp. What do you mutter about a time, raſcal—You were the incendiary.—There's to put you in mind of your time—a memorandum. [*Kicks him.*

Bluffe. Oh, this is your time, Sir, you had beſt make uſe on't.

Sharp. Igad, and ſo I will:—there's again for you. [*Kicks him.*

Bluffe. You are obliging, Sir, but this is too public a place to thank you in; but in your ear, you are to be ſeen again.

Sharp. Ay, thou inimitable coward, and to be felt—as for example. [*Kicks him.*

Bell. Ha, ha, ha! Prithee, come away, 'tis ſcandalous to kick this puppy, unleſs a man were cold, and had no other way to get himſelf a heat. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IX.

Sir JOSEPH, BLUFFE.

Bluffe. Very well——very fine——But 'tis no matter——Is not this fine, Sir Joſeph?

Sir Jo. Indifferent, agad, in my opinion, very indifferent—I'd rather go plain all my life, than wear ſuch finery.

Bluffe. Death and hell! to be affronted thus! I'll die before I'll ſuffer it. [*Draws.*

Sir Jo. O Lord, his anger was not raiſed before——Nay, dear Captain, don't be in paſſion now he's gone—Put up, put up, dear back, 'tis your Sir Joſeph begs; come, let me kiſs thee; ſo, ſo, put up, put up.

Bluffe. By Heav'n, 'tis not to be put up.

Sir Jo. What, bully?

Bluffe. The affront.

Sir Jo. No, agad, no more 'tis, for that's put up already; thy ſword I mean.

Bluffe. Well, Sir Joſeph, at your entreaty—But were not you, my friend, abus'd, and cuff'd, and kick'd? [*Putting up his ſword.*

Sir Jo. Ay, ay, ſo were you too; no matter, 'tis paſt.

Bluffe. By the immortal thunder of great guns, 'tis falſe——he ſucks not vital air who dares affirm it to this face. [*Looks big.*

Sir Jo. To that face I grant you, Captain——No, no, I grant you—not to that face, by the Lord Harry.——If you had put on your fighting face before, you had done his buſineſs——He durſt as ſoon have kiſſed you as kick'd you to your face—but a man can no more

help what's done behind his back, than what's ſaid.—Come, we'll think no more of what's paſt.

Bluffe. I'll call a council of war within, to conſider of my revenge to come.

SCENE X.

Silvia's *Apartment.*

HEARTWELL, SILVIA.

SONG.

As Amoret and Thyrſis lay
Melting the hours in gentle play;
Joining faces, mingling kiſſes,
And exchanging harmleſs bliſſes:
He trembling cry'd, with eager haſte,
O let me feed as well as taſte,
I die, if I'm not wholly bleſs'd.

After the ſong, a dance of antics.

Silv. Indeed, it is very fine——I could look upon 'em all day.

Heart. Well, has this prevail'd for me, and will you look upon me?

Silv. If you could ſing and dance ſo, I ſhould love to look upon you too.

Heart. Why, 'twas I ſung and danc'd; I gave muſic to the voice, and life to their meaſures.——Look you here, Silvia, [*Pulling out a purſe, and chinking it.*] here are ſongs and dances, poetry and muſic——hark! how ſweetly one guinea rhymes to another—and how they dance to the muſic of their own chink! This buys all the other—and this thou ſhalt have; this, and all that I am worth, for the purchaſe of thy love.——Say, is it mine then, ha? Speak, ſyren——Oons, why do I look on her! Yet I muſt——Speak, dear angel, devil, ſaint, witch; do not rack me with ſuſpenſe.

Silv. Nay, don't ſtare at me ſo—you make me bluſh——I cannot look.

Heart. Oh manhood, where art thou! What am I

come to? A woman's toy; and at theſe years! Death, a bearded baby for a girl to dandle. O dotage, dotage! that ever that noble paſſion, *luſt*, ſhould ebb to this degree——No reflux of vigorous blood; but milky Love ſupplies the empty channels; and prompts me to the ſoftneſs of a child——a mere infant and would ſuck. Can you love me, Silvia? ſpeak.

Silv. I dare not ſpeak till I believe you, and indeed I'm afraid to believe you yet.

Heart. Death, how her innocence torments and pleaſes me! Lying, child, is indeed the art of love; and men are generally maſters in it; but I'm ſo newly entered, you cannot diſtruſt me of any ſkill in the treacherous myſtery——Now, by my ſoul, I cannot lie, though it were to ſerve a friend, or gain a miſtreſs.

Silv. Muſt you lie then, if you ſay you love me?

Heart. No, no, dear ignorance, thou beauteous changeling—I tell thee I do love thee, and tell it for a truth, a naked truth, which I'm aſhamed to diſcover.

Silv. But Love, they ſay, is a tender thing, that will ſmooth frowns, and make calm an angry face; will ſoften a rugged temper, and make ill-humoured people good: you look ready to fright one, and talk as if your paſſion were not love but anger.

Heart. 'Tis both; for I am angry with myſelf when I am pleaſed with you——And a pox upon me for loving thee ſo well——yet I muſt on—'tis a bearded arrow, and will more eaſily be thruſt forward than drawn back.

Silv. Indeed, if I were well aſſur'd you lov'd; but how can I be well aſſur'd?

Heart. Take the ſymptoms——and aſk all the tyrants of thy ſex, if their fools are not known by this party-coloured livery.——I am melancholic, when thou art abſent; look like an aſs, when thou art preſent; wake for thee, when I ſhould ſleep; and even dream of thee, when I am awake; ſigh much, drink little, eat leſs, court ſolitude, am grown very entertaining to myſelf, and (as I am informed) very troubleſome to every body elſe. If this be not love, it is madneſs,

and then it is pardonable——Nay, yet a more certain ſign than all this; I give thee my money.

Silv. Ay, but that is no ſign; for they ſay, gentlemen will give money to any naughty woman to come to bed to them—O Gemini, I hope you don't mean ſo ——for I won't be a whore.

Heart. The more is the pity. [*Aſide.*

Silv. Nay, if you would marry me, you ſhould not come to bed to me—you have ſuch a beard, and would ſo prickle one. But do you intend to marry me?

Heart. That a fool ſhould aſk ſuch a malicious queſtion! Death, I ſhall be drawn in, before I know where I am——however, I find I am pretty ſure of her conſent, if I am put to it. [*Aſide.*] Marry you? no, no, I'll love you.

Silv. Nay, but if you love me, you muſt marry me; what, don't I know my father lov'd my mother, and was married to her?

Heart. Ay, ay, in old days people married where they lov'd; but that faſhion is chang'd, child.

Silv. Never tell me that, I know 'tis not chang'd by myſelf; for I love you, and would marry you.

Heart. I'll have my beard ſhav'd, it ſhan't hurt thee, and we'll go to bed———

Silv. No, no, I'm not ſuch a fool neither but I can keep myſelf honeſt.——Here, I won't keep any thing that's yours, I hate you now, [*Throws the purſe.*] and I'll never ſee you again, 'cauſe you'd have me naught. [*Going.*

Heart. Damn her, let her go, and a good riddance—Yet ſo much tenderneſs and beauty—and honeſty together is a jewel——Stay, Silvia——But then to marry; why every man plays the fool once in his life: but to marry is playing the fool all one's life long.

Silv. What did you call me for?

Heart. I'll give thee all I have: and thou ſhalt live with me in every thing ſo like my wife, the world ſhall believe it: nay, thou ſhalt think ſo thyſelf——only let me not think ſo.

Silv. No, I'll die before I'll be your whore——as well as I love you.

Heart. aſide.] A woman, and ignorant, may be honeſt, but 'tis out of obſtinacy and contradiction—but, 'ſdeath, it is but a may be, and upon ſcurvy terms—— Well, farewell then.——If I can get out of ſight I may get the better of myſelf.

Silv. Well——good bye. [*Turns and weeps.*

Heart. Ha! Nay, come, we'll kiſs at parting. [*Kiſſes her.*] By Heav'n her kiſs is ſweeter than liberty—I will marry thee——There, thou haſt done't. All my reſolves melted in that kiſs.——One more!

Silv. But when?

Heart. I'm impatient till it be done; I will not give myſelf liberty to think, leſt I ſhould cool.——I will about a licence ſtraight——in the evening expect me. ——One kiſs more to confirm me mad; ſo. [*Exit.*

Silv. Ha, ha, ha! an old fox trapp'd——

SCENE XI.

To her LUCY.

Bleſs me! you frighted me; I thought he had been come again, and had heard me.

Lucy. Lord, Madam, I met your lover in as much haſte, as if he had been going for a midwife.

Silv. He's going for a parſon, girl, the forerunner of a midwife, ſome nine months hence.——Well, I find diſſembling to our ſex is as natural as ſwimming to a negro: we may depend upon our ſkill to ſave us at a plunge, tho' till then we never make the experiment—But how haſt thou ſucceeded?

Lucy. As you would wiſh——ſince there is no reclaiming Vainlove. I have found out a pique ſhe has taken at him; and have framed a letter that makes her ſue for reconciliation firſt. I know that will do—— walk in, and I'll ſhew it you. Come, Madam, you're like to have a happy time on't; both your love and anger ſatisfied!—All that can charm our ſex conſpire to pleaſe you.

That woman ſure enjoys a bleſſed night,
Whom love and vengeance both, at once, delight.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT IV. SCENE I.

The Street.

BELLMOUR *in fanatic habit*, SETTER.

BELLMOUR.

'TIS pretty near the hour. [*Looking on his watch.*] Well, and how Setter, hæ, does my hypocriſy fit me, hæ? Does it ſit eaſy on me?

Setter. O moſt religiouſly well, Sir.

Bell. I wonder why all our young fellows ſhould glory in an opinion of atheiſm; when they may be ſo much more conveniently lewd under the coverlet of religion.

Setter. S'bud, Sir, away quickly, there's Fondlewife juſt turn'd the corner, and's coming this way.

Bell. Gads ſo, there he is, he muſt not ſee me.

SCENE II.

FONDLEWIFE, BARNABY.

Fond. I ſay, I will tarry at home.

Bar. But, Sir.

Fond. Good lack! I profeſs the ſpirit of contradiction hath poſſeſs'd the lad—I ſay I will tarry at home——Varlet.

Bar. I have done, Sir: then farewell five hundred pound.

Fond. Ha! how's that? Stay, ſtay, did you leave word ſay you with his wife? with Comfort herſelf?

Bar. I did; and Comfort will ſend Tribulation hither as ſoon as ever he comes home—I could have brought young Mr Prig, to have kept my miſtreſs company in the mean time: but you ſay——

Fond. How, how, ſay, Varlet! I ſay let him not come near my doors, I ſay he is a wanton young Levite, and pampereth himſelf up with dainties, that he may look lovely in the eyes of women—ſincerely, I am afraid he hath already defiled the tabernacle of our Siſter Comfort; while her good huſband is deluded by his godly

appearance——I ſay, that even luſt doth ſparkle in his eyes, and glow upon his cheeks, and that I would as ſoon truſt my wife with a lord's high-fed chaplain.

Bar. Sir, the hour draws nigh—and nothing will be done there 'till you come.

Fond. And nothing can be done here 'till I go—ſo that I'll tarry, d'ee ſee.

Bar. And run the hazard to loſe your affair, Sir?

Fond. Good lack, good lack—I profeſs it is a very ſufficient vexation, for a man to have a handſome wife.

Bar. Never, Sir, but when the man is an inſufficient huſband. 'Tis then, indeed, like the vanity of taking a fine houſe, and yet be forced to let lodgings, to help pay the rent.

Fond. I profeſs a very apt compariſon, Varlet. Go, and bid my cocky come out to me; I will give her ſome inſtructions, I will reaſon with her before I go.

SCENE III.

FONDLEWIFE *alone.*

Fond. And, in the mean time, I will reaſon with myſelf—Tell me, Iſaac, why art thee jealous? why art thee diſtruſtful of the wife of thy boſom?—Becauſe ſhe is young and vigorous, and I am old and impotent—Then why didſt thee marry, Iſaac?—Becauſe ſhe was beautiful and tempting, and becauſe I was obſtinate and doating; ſo that my inclination was, and is ſtill, greater than my power—And will not that which tempted thee, alſo tempt others, who will tempt her, Iſaac?—I fear it much—But does not thy wife love thee, nay dote upon thee?—Yes—Why, then? Ay, but to ſay truth, ſhe's fonder of me, than ſhe has reaſon to be; and in the way of trade, we ſtill ſuſpect the ſmootheſt dealers of the deepeſt deſigns—and that ſhe has ſome deſigns deeper than thou canſt reach, th' haſt experimented, Iſaac——but mum.

SCENE IV.

FONDLEWIFE, LÆTITIA.

Læt. I hope my deareſt jewel is not going to leave me——are you, Nykin?

Fond. Wife—Have you throughly conſider'd how deteſtable, how heinous, and how crying a ſin, the ſin of adultery is? have you weigh'd it, I ſay? For it is a very weighty ſin; and although it may ly heavy upon thee, yet thy huſband muſt alſo bear his part: for thy iniquity will fall upon his head.

Læt. Bleſs me, what means my dear?

Fond. aſide.] I profeſs ſhe has an alluring eye; I am doubtful whether I ſhall truſt her even with Tribulation himſelf—Speak, I ſay, have you conſidered what it is to cuckold your huſband?

Læt. aſide.] I'm amazed: ſure he has diſcovered nothing—Who has wrong'd me to my deareſt? I hope my jewel does not think that ever I had any ſuch thing in my head, or ever will have.

Fond. No, no, I tell you I ſhall have it in my head—

Læt. aſide.] I know not what to think. But I'm reſolv'd to find the meaning of it—Unkind dear! was it for this you ſent to call me? is it not affliction enough that you are to leave me, but you muſt ſtudy to increaſe it by unjuſt ſuſpicions? [*Crying.*] Well—well—you know my fondneſs, and you love to tyrannize—— Go on, cruel man, do, triumph over my poor heart, while it holds, which cannot be long, with this uſage of yours—but that's what you want—well, you will have your ends ſoon—you will—you will, yes it will break to oblige you. [*Sighs.*

Fond. Verily I fear I have carried the jeſt too far—Nay, look you now if ſhe does not weep—'tis the fondeſt fool—Nay, Cocky, Cocky, nay, dear Cocky, don't cry, I was but in jeſt, I was not ifeck.

Læt. aſide.] O then all's ſafe. I was terribly frighted—My affliction is always your jeſt, barbarous man! Oh that I ſhould love to this degree! yet———

Fond. Nay, Cocky.

Læt. No, no, you are weary of me, that's it—that's all, you would get another wife—another fond fool, to break her heart—well, be as cruel as you can to me, I'll pray for you; and when I am dead with grief, may you have one that will love you as well as I have done:

I ſhall be contented to ly at peace in my cold grave—ſince it will pleaſe you. [*Sighs.*

Fond. Good lack, good lack, ſhe would melt a heart of oak——I profeſs I can hold no longer——Nay dear Cocky—Ifeck you'll break my heart—Ifeck you will—See you have made me weep—made poor Nykin weep.—Nay, come kiſs, buſs, poor Nykin—and I won't leave thee—I'll loſe all firſt.

Læt. aſide.] How! Heaven forbid! that will be carrying the jeſt too far indeed.

Fond. Won't you kiſs Nykin?

Læt. Go, naughty Nykin, you don't love me.

Fond. Kiſs, kiſs; ifeck I do.

Læt. No, you don't. [*She kiſſes him.*

Fond. What, not love Cocky?

Læt. No——h. [*Sighs.*

Fond. I profeſs I do love thee better than five hundred pound—and ſo thou ſhalt ſay, for I'll leave it to ſtay with thee.

Læt. No, you ſhan't neglect your buſineſs for me—No indeed you ſant, Nykin——If you don't go, I'll think you been dealous of me ſtill.

Fond. He, he, he! wilt thou, poor fool? Then I will go, I won't be dealous—Poor Cocky, kiſs Nykin, kiſs Nykin, ee, ee, ee—Here will be the good man anon, to talk to Cocky, and teach her how a wife ought to behave herſelf.

Læt. aſide.] I hope to have one that will ſhew me how a huſband ought to behave himſelf——I ſhall be glad to learn, to pleaſe my jewel. [*Kiſs.*

Fond. That's my good dear—Come, kiſs Nykin once more, and then get you in—So—Get you in, get you in. By, by.

Læt. By, Nykin.

Fond. By, Cocky.

Læt. By, Nykin.

Fond. By, Cocky, by, by.

SCENE V.

VAINLOVE, SHARPER.

Sharp. How! Araminta loſt!

Vain. To confirm what I have ſaid, read this——

[*Gives a letter.*

Sharp. reads.] Hum, hum——"And what then ap-
"pear'd a fault, upon reflection, ſeems only an effect
"of a too powerful paſſion. I'm afraid I give too great
"a proof of my own at this time—I am in diſorder
"for what I have written. But ſomething, I know not
"what, forced me. I only beg a favourable cenſure
"of this and your ARAMINTA."

Sharp. Loſt! Pray Heav'n thou haſt not loſt thy wits. Here, here, ſhe's thy own, man, ſign'd and ſeal'd too—To her, man—a delicious melon, pure and conſenting ripe, and only waits thy cutting up——She has been breeding love to thee all this while, and juſt now ſhe's deliver'd of it.

Vain. 'Tis an untimely fruit, and ſhe has miſcarried of her love.

Sharp. Never leave this damn'd, ill-natur'd whimſy, Frank? Thou haſt a ſickly peeviſh appetite; only chew love, and cannot digeſt it.

Vain. Yes, when I feed myſelf——but I hate to be cramm'd—by Heav'n, there's not a woman will give a man the pleaſure of a chace: my ſport is always balkt, or cut ſhort—I ſtumble over the game I would purſue—'Tis dull and unnatural to have a hare run full in the hounds mouth; and would diſtaſte the keeneſt hunter—I would have overtaken, not have met my game.

Sharp. However, I hope you don't mean to forſake it; that will be but a kind of mongrel cur's trick. Well, are you for the Mall?

Vain. No, ſhe will be there this evening—Yes, I will go too—and ſhe ſhall ſee her error in———

Sharp. In her choice, i'gad—but thou canſt not be ſo great a brute as ſlight her?

Vain. I ſhould diſappoint her if I did not—by her management I ſhould think ſhe expects it.

All naturally fly what does purſue:
'Tis fit men ſhould be coy, when women woo.

SCENE VI.

A Room in Fondlewife's *Houſe.*

A SERVANT *introducing* BELLMOUR *in fanatic habit, with a patch upon one eye, and a book in his hand.*

Serv. Here's a chair, Sir, if you pleaſe to repoſe yourſelf. My miſtreſs is coming, Sir.

Bell. Secure in my diſguiſe, I have outfac'd Suſpicion, and even dar'd Diſcovery—this cloke my ſanctity, and truſty Scarron's novels my prayerbook——Methinks I am the very picture of Montufar in the Hypocrites——O ſhe comes.

SCENE VII.

BELLMOUR, LÆTITIA.

So breaks Aurora through the veil of night,
Thus fly the clouds, divided by her light,
And ev'ry eye receives a new-born ſight.

[*Throwing off his cloke, patch,* &c.

Læt. This ſtrow'd with bluſhes, like——Ah! Heav'n defend me! who's this? [*Diſcovering him, ſtarts.*

Bell. Your lover.

Læt. Vainlove's friend! I know his face, and he has betray'd me to him. [*Aſide.*

Bell. You are ſurpriſed. Did you not expect a lover, Madam? Thoſe eyes ſhone kindly on my firſt appearance, though now they are o'ercaſt.

Læt. I may well be ſurpris'd at your perſon and impudence; they are both new to me—you are not what your firſt appearance promiſed: the piety of your habit was welcome, but not the hypocriſy.

Bell. Rather the hypocriſy was welcome, but not the hypocrite.

Læt. Who are you, Sir? You have miſtaken the houſe ſure.

Bell. I have directions in my pocket, which agree with every thing but your unkindneſs. [*Pulls out the letter.*

Læt. My letter! baſe Vainlove! Then 'tis too late to diſſemble. [*Aſide.*] 'Tis plain then you have miſtaken the perſon. [*Going.*

Bell. If we part ſo I'm miſtaken——Hold, hold, Madam——I confeſs I have run into an error——I beg your pardon a thouſand times——What an eternal blockhead am I! can you forgive me the diſorder I have put you into?——But it is a miſtake which any body might have made.

Læt. What can this mean? 'Tis impoſſible he ſhould be miſtaken after all this——A handſome fellow, if he had not ſurpris'd me: methinks, now I look on him again, I would not have him miſtaken. [*Aſide.*] We are all liable to miſtakes, Sir, if you own it to be ſo, there needs no farther apology.

Bell. Nay, 'faith, Madam, 'tis a pleaſant one; and worth your hearing. Expecting a friend, laſt night, at his lodgings, 'till 'twas late, my intimacy with him gave me the freedom of his bed: he not coming home all night, a letter was deliver'd to me by a ſervant, in the morning: upon the peruſal I found the contents ſo charming, that I could think of nothing all day but putting 'em in practice——'till juſt now, (the firſt time I ever look'd upon the ſuperſcription) I am the moſt ſurpris'd in the world to find it directed to Mr Vainlove. Gad, Madam, I aſk you a million of pardons, and will make you any ſatisfaction.

Læt. I am diſcover'd—and either Vainlove is not guilty, or he has handſomely excus'd him. [*Aſide.*

Bell. You appear concern'd, Madam.

Læt. I hope you are a gentleman;—and ſince you are privy to a weak woman's failing, won't turn it to the prejudice of her reputation. You look as if you had more honour——

Bell. And more love; or my face is a falſe witneſs, and deſerves to be pillory'd—no, by Heav'n, I ſwear—

Læt. Nay, don't ſwear if you'd have me believe you; but promiſe——

Bell. Well, I promiſe——A promiſe is ſo cold——give me leave to ſwear—by thoſe eyes, thoſe killing eyes; by thoſe healing lips——Oh! preſs the ſoft charm cloſe to mine, and ſeal 'em up for ever.

Læt. Upon that condition. [*He kiſſes her.*

Bell. Eternity was in that moment——One more, upon any condition.

Læt. Nay, now——I never ſaw any thing ſo agreeably impudent. [*Aſide.*] Won't you cenſure me for this, now?—but 'tis to buy your ſilence [*Kiſs.*] Oh, but what am I doing!

Bell. No tongue can expreſs it—not thy own; nor any thing, but thy lips. I am faint with the exceſs of bliſs:———Oh, for love's ſake, lead me any whither, where I may ly down;—quickly, for I'm afraid I ſhall have a fit.

Læt. Bleſs me! what fit?

Bell. Oh, a convulſion——I feel the ſymptoms.

Læt. Does it hold you long? I'm afraid to carry you into my bed-chamber.

Bell. Oh, no: let me ly down upon the bed;—the fit will be ſoon over.

SCENE VIII.

St James's Park.

ARAMINTA *and* BELINDA *meeting.*

Belin. Lard, my dear! I am glad I have met you—I have been at the Exchange ſince, and am ſo tir'd——

Aram. Why, what's the matter?

Belin. Oh the moſt inhuman barbarous hackney-coach! I am jolted to a jelly——Am I not horridly touz'd? [*Pulls out a pocket glaſs.*

Aram. Your head's a little out of order.

Belin. A little! O frightful! what a furious phyz I have! O moſt rueful! Ha, ha, ha! O Gad, I hope no body will come this way 'till I have put myſelf in repair.—Ah! my dear——I have ſeen ſuch unhewn creatures ſince——Ha, ha, ha! I can't for my ſoul help thinking that I look juſt like one of 'em—Good dear,

pin this, and I'll tell you——Very well—So, thank you, my dear——But as I was telling you—Piſh, this is the untoward'ſt lock———So, as I was telling you——How dy'e like me now? hideous, ha? frightful ſtill? or how?

Aram. No, no; you're very well as can be.

Belin. And ſo—But where did I leave off, my dear? I was telling you——

Aram. You were about to tell me ſomething, child—but you left off before you began.

Belin. Oh! a moſt comical ſight: a country ſquire, with the equipage of a wife and two daughters, came to Mrs Snipwell's ſhop while I was there—but, oh Gad! two ſuch unlick'd cubs!

Aram. I warrant, plump, cherry-cheek'd country girls.

Belin. Ay, o' my conſcience, fair as barn-door fowl: but ſo bedeck'd, you would have taken 'em for Friezland hens, with their feathers growing the wrong way—O, ſuch outlandiſh creatures! ſuch *Tramontanæ*, and foreigners to the faſhion, or any thing in practice! I had no patience to behold—I undertook the modelling of one of their fronts, the more modern ſtructure——

Aram. Bleſs me, Couſin; why would you affront any body ſo? they might be gentlewomen of a very good family——

Belin. Of a very ancient one, I dare ſwear, by their dreſs—Affront! Pſhaw, how you're miſtaken! the poor creature, I warrant, was as full of courteſies as if I had been her godmother: the truth on't is, I did endeavour to make her look like a Chriſtian—and ſhe was ſenſible of it; for ſhe thank'd me, and gave me two apples, piping hot, out of her under petticoat pocket—Ha, ha, ha! and t'other did ſo ſtare and gape—I fancied her like the front of her father's hall; her eyes were the two jut windows, and her mouth the great door, moſt hoſpitably kept open for the entertainment of travelling flies.

Aram. So, then you have been diverted. What did they buy?

Belin. Why, the father bought a powderhorn, and an almanack, and a comb-caſe; the mother, a great

fruz-tower, and a fat amber necklace; the daughters only tore two pair of kid-leather gloves, with trying 'em on—Oh Gad, here comes the fool that din'd at my Lady Freelove's t'other day.

SCENE IX.

To them Sir JOSEPH *and* BLUFFE.

Aram. May be he may not know us again.

Belin. We'll put on our maſks, to ſecure his ignorance. [*They put on their maſks.*

Sir Jo. Nay, Gad, I'll pick up; I'm reſolv'd to make a night on't—I'll go to Alderman Fondlewife's by and by, and get fifty pieces more from him. Adſlidikins, Bully, we'll wallow in wine and women. Why, this ſame Madeira wine has made me as light as a graſhopper——Hiſt, hiſt, Bully, doſt thou ſee thoſe tearers? [*Sings*] *Look you what here is—Look you what here is—Toll—loll—dera—toll—loll*—A Gad, t'other glaſs of Madeira, and I durſt have attack'd 'em in my own proper perſon, without your help.

Bluffe. Come on then, Knight—but d'ye know what to ſay to 'em?

Sir Jo. Say: Pooh, pox, I've enough to ſay—never fear it———that is, if I can but think on't: truth is, I have but a treacherous memory.

Belin. O frightful! Couſin, what ſhall we do? theſe things come towards us.

Aram. No matter—I ſee Vainlove coming this way—and, to confeſs my failing, I am willing to give him an opportunity of making his peace with me—and to rid me of theſe coxcombs, when I ſeem oppreſs'd with 'em, will be a fair one.

Bluffe. Ladies, by theſe hilts you are well met.

Aram. We are not afraid.

Bluffe. What ſays my pretty little knapſack-carrier? [*To* Belinda.

Belin. O monſtrous filthy fellow! good ſlovenly Captain Huffe, Bluffe (what is thy hideous name?) be gone:

you ſtink of brandy and tobacco, moſt ſoldier-like. Foh. [*Spits.*

Sir Jo. Now am I ſlap-daſh down in the mouth, and have not one word to ſay! [*Aſide.*

Aram. I hope my fool has not confidence enough to be troubleſome. [*Aſide.*

Sir Jo. Hem! Pray, Madam, which way's the wind!

Aram. A pithy queſtion—have you ſent your wits for a venture, Sir, that you enquire?

Sir Jo. Nay, now I'm in———I can prattle like a magpie. [*Aſide.*

SCENE X.

To them SHARPER *and* VAINLOVE *at ſome diſtance.*

Belin. Dear Araminta, I'm tir'd.

Aram. 'Tis but pulling off our maſks, and obliging Vainlove to know us. I'll be rid of my fool by fair means—Well, Sir Joſeph, you ſhall ſee my face—but, be gone immediately—I ſee one that will be jealous to find me in diſcourſe with you—Be diſcreet—No reply; but away. [*Unmaſks.*

Sir Jo. The great fortune that dined at my Lady Freelove's! Sir Joſeph, thou art a made man. Agad, I'm in love up to the ears. But I'll be diſcreet, and huſht. [*Aſide.*

Bluffe. Nay, by the world, I'll ſee your face.

Belin. You ſhall. [*Unmaſks.*

Sharp. Ladies, your humble ſervant—We were afraid you would not have given us leave to know you.

Aram. We thought to have been private———but we find fools have the ſame advantage over a face in a maſk, that a coward has, while the ſword is in the ſcabbard—ſo were forced to draw in our own defence.

Bluffe. My blood riſes at that fellow: I can't ſtay where he is; and I muſt not draw in the park.

[*To* Sir Joſeph.

Sir Jo. I wiſh I durſt ſtay to let her know my lodging———

SCENE XI.

ARAMINTA, BELINDA, VAINLOVE, SHARPER.

Sharp. There is in true beauty, as in courage, ſomewhat, which narrow ſouls cannot dare to admire—and ſee, the owls are fled, as at the break of day.

Belin. Very courtly—I believe Mr Vainlove has not rubb'd his eyes ſince break of day neither, he looks as if he durſt not approach—nay, come Couſin, be friends with him—I ſwear he looks ſo very ſimply, Ha, ha, ha! —well, a lover in the ſtate of ſeparation from his miſtreſs, is like a body without a ſoul. Mr Vainlove, ſhall I be bound for your good behaviour for the future?

Vain. Now muſt I pretend ignorance equal to hers, of what ſhe knows as well as I. [*Aſide.*] Men are apt to offend ('tis true) where they find moſt goodneſs to forgive—but, Madam, I hope I ſhall prove of a temper, not to abuſe mercy, by committing new offences.

Aram. So cold! [*Aſide.*

Belin. I have broke the ice for you, Mr Vainlove, and ſo I leave you. Come, Mr Sharper, you and I will take a turn, and laugh at the vulgar—both the great vulgar and the ſmall——Oh gad! I have a great paſſion for Cowley—don't you admire him?

Sharp. Oh Madam! he was our Engliſh Horace.

Belin. Oh ſo fine! ſo extremely fine! ſo every thing in the world that I like!—Oh Lord, walk this way—I ſee a couple, I'll give you their hiſtory.

SCENE XII.

ARAMINTA, VAINLOVE.

Vain. I find, Madam, the formality of the law muſt be obſerv'd, though the penalty of it be diſpens'd with; and an offender muſt plead to his arraignment, though he has his pardon in his pocket.

Aram. I'm amaz'd! This inſolence exceeds t'other; whoever has encourag'd you in this aſſurance—preſuming upon the eaſineſs of my temper, has much deceiv'd you, and ſo you ſhall find.

Vain. Hey day! which way now! Here's fine doubling. [*Aside.*

Aram. Baſe man! was it not enough to affront me with your ſaucy paſſion?

Vain. You have given that paſſion a much kinder epithet than ſaucy, in another place.

Aram. Another place! ſome villainous deſign to blaſt my honour—But though thou haſt all the treachery and malice of thy ſex, thou canſt not lay a blemiſh on my fame——no; I have not err'd in one favourable thought of mankind—How time might have deceiv'd me in you, I know not; my opinion was but young, and your early baſeneſs has prevented its growing to a wrong belief—Unworthy and ungrateful! be gone, and never ſee me more.

Vain. Did I dream? or do I dream? ſhall I believe my eyes or ears? the viſion is here ſtill—your paſſion, Madam, will admit of no farther reaſoning—but here's a ſilent witneſs of your acquaintance.

[*Takes out the letter, and offers it: ſhe ſnatches it and throws it away.*

Aram. There's poiſon in every thing you touch—bliſters will follow——

Vain. That tongue which denies what the hands have done——

Aram. Still myſtically ſenſeleſs and impudent——I find I muſt leave the place.

Vain. No, Madam, I'm gone—ſhe knows her name's to it, which ſhe will be unwilling to expoſe to the cenſure of the firſt finder.

Aram. Woman's obſtinacy made me blind, to what woman's curioſity now tempts me to ſee.

[*Takes up the letter.*

SCENE XIII.

BELINDA, SHARPER.

Belin. Nay, we have ſpared no body, I ſwear. Mr Sharper, you're a pure man; where did you get this excellent talent of railing?

Sharp. Faith, Madam, the talent was born with me —I confeſs, I have taken care to improve it, to qualify me for the ſociety of ladies.

Belin. Nay, ſure railing is the beſt qualification in a woman's man.

SCENE XIV.

To them FOOTMAN.

Sharp. The ſecond beſt,——indeed I think.

Belin. How now, Pace? where's my couſin?

Foot. She's not very well, Madam, and has ſent to know if your Ladyſhip would have the coach come again for you?

Belin. O Lord, no, I'll go along with her. Come, Mr Sharper.

SCENE XV.

A Chamber in Fondlewife's *houſe.*

LÆTITIA *and* BELLMOUR, *his cloak, hat,* &c. *lying looſe about the chamber.*

Bell. Here's nobody, nor no noiſe—'twas nothing but your fears.

Læt. I durſt have ſworn I heard my monſter's voice ——I ſwear I was heartily frightened——Feel how my heart beats.

Bell. 'Tis an alarm to love—Come in again and let us——

Fond. without.] Cocky, Cocky, where are you, Cocky? I'm come home.

Læt. Ah! there he is, make haſte, gather up your things!

Fond. Cocky, Cocky, open the door.

Bell. Pox choke him! would his horns were in his throat! My patch, my patch.

[*Looking about and gathering up his things.*

Læt. My jewel, art thou there?—No matter for your patch——Yous'an't tum in, Nykin—Run into my chamber, quickly, quickly—Yous'ant tum in.

Fond. Nay, prithee Dear, iſeck, I'm in haſte.

Læt. Then I'll let you in. [*Opens the door.*

SCENE XVI.

LÆTITIA, FONDLEWIFE, *Sir* JOSEPH.

Fond. Kiſs, dear—I met the maſter of the ſhip by the way—and I muſt have my papers of accounts out of your cabinet.

Læt. Oh, I'm undone! [*Aſide.*

Sir Jo. Pray, firſt let me have 50*l.* good Alderman, for I'm in haſte.

Fond. A hundred has already been paid by your order. Fifty? I have the ſum ready in gold, in my cloſet.

SCENE XVII.

LÆTITIA, *Sir* JOSEPH.

Sir Jo. Agad, it's a curious fine, pretty rogue; I'll ſpeak to her—Pray, Madam, what news d'ye hear?

Læt. Sir, I ſeldom ſtir abroad.

[*Walks about in diſorder.*

Sir Jo. I wonder at that, Madam, for 'tis moſt curious fine weather.

Læt. Methinks 't has been very ill weather.

Sir Jo. As you ſay, Madam, 'tis pretty bad weather, and has been ſo a great while.

SCENE XVIII.

To them FONDLEWIFE.

Fond. Here are fifty pieces in this purſe, Sir Joſeph—If you will tarry a moment 'till I fetch my papers, I'll wait upon you down ſtairs.

Læt. Ruin'd paſt redemption! What ſhall I do—— Ha! this fool may be of uſe. (*Aſide.*) [*As* Fondlewife *is going into the chamber, ſhe runs to Sir* Joſeph, *almoſt puſhes him down, and cries out.*] Stand off, rude ruffian! help me, my dear———O bleſs me! Why will you leave me alone with ſuch a ſatyr!

Fond. Bleſs us! what's the matter? what's the matter?

Læt. Your back was no ſooner turn'd; but like a lion, he came open mouth'd upon me, and would have raviſh'd a kiſs from me by main force.

Sir Jo. O Lord! Oh terrible! Ha, ha, ha! is your wife mad, Alderman?

Læt. Oh, I'm ſick with the fright: won't you take him out of my ſight?

Fond. Oh traitor! I'm aſtoniſhed. Oh bloody-minded traitor!

Sir Jo. Hey-day! traitor yourſelf——by the Lord Harry, I was in moſt danger of being raviſh'd, if you go to that.

Fond. Oh, how the blaſphemous wretch ſwears! Out of my houſe, thou ſon of the whore of Babylon; offſpring of Bell and the Dragon——Bleſs us! raviſh my wife, my Dinah! Oh Shechemite, be gone, I ſay.

Sir Jo. Why, the devil's in the people, I think.

SCENE XIX.

LÆTITIA, FONDLEWIFE.

Læt. Oh, won't you follow and ſee him out of doors, my dear?

Fond. I'll ſhut this door to ſecure him from coming back——give me the key of your cabinet, Cocky——Raviſh my wife before my face! I warrant he's a papiſt in his heart, at leaſt, if not a Frenchman.

Læt. What can I do now? [*Aſide.*] Oh, my dear, I have been in ſuch a fright, that I forgot to tell you, poor Mr Spintext has a ſad fit of the colic, and is forced to ly down upon our bed——You'll diſturb him; I can tread ſoftlier.

Fond. Alack, poor man!—no, no—you don't know the papers——I won't diſturb him; give me the key.

[*She gives him the key, goes to the chamber-door, and ſpeaks aloud.*

Læt. 'Tis nobody but Mr Fondlewife, Mr Spintext, ly ſtill on your ſtomach; lying on your ſtomach will eaſe you of the colic.

Fond. Ay, ay, ly ſtill, ly ſtill; don't let me diſturb you.

SCENE XX.

LÆTITIA *alone.*

Læt. Sure, when he does not ſee his face, he won't diſcover him. Dear Fortune, help me but this once, and I'll never run in thy debt again—but this opportunity is the devil.

SCENE XXI.

FONDLEWIFE *returns with papers.*

Fond. Good lack, good lack!——I profeſs, the poor man is in great torment, he lyes as flat——dear, you ſhould heat a trencher, or a napkin——Where's Deborah? let her clap ſome warm thing to his ſtomach, or chafe it with a warm hand, rather than fail. What book's this? [*Sees the book that* Bellmour *forgot.*

Læt. Mr Spintext's prayerbook, Dear—Pray Heav'n it be a prayerbook! [*Aſide.*

Fond. Good man! I warrant he dropped it on purpoſe that you might take it up, and read ſome of the pious ejaculations. [*Taking up the book*] O bleſs me! O monſtrous! A prayerbook! Ay, this is the devil's paternoſter. Hold, let me ſee, *The Innocent Adultery.*

Læt. Misfortune! now all's ruin'd again. [*Aſide.*

Bell. peeping.] Damn'd chance! if I had gone a whoring with the *Practice of Piety* in my pocket, I had never been diſcover'd.

Fond. Adultery and innocent! O Lord! Here's doctrine! Ay, here's diſcipline!

Læt. Dear huſband! I'm amaz'd—ſure it is a good book, and only tends to the ſpeculation of ſin.

Fond. Speculation! No, no; ſomething went farther than ſpeculation when I was not to be let in.—Where is this apocryphal elder? I'll ferret him.

Læt. I'm ſo diſtracted, I can't think of a lie. [*Aſide.*

SCENE XXII.

LÆTITIA, *and* FONDLEWIFE *haling out* BELLMOUR.

Fond. Come out here, thou Ananias incarnate—— Who, how now! who have we here?

Læt. Ha! [*Shrieks, as ſurpris'd.*

Fond. Oh, thou falacious woman? Am I then brutified? Ay, I feel it here: I ſprout, I bud, I bloſſom, I am ripehorn mad. But who in the devil's name are you? Mercy on me for ſwearing! But——

Læt. Oh, Goodneſs keep us! Who's this? Who are you? What are you?

Bell. Soh.

Læt. In the name of the—O! good, my Dear, don't come near it, I'm afraid 'tis the devil; indeed it has hoofs, Dear.

Fond. Indeed, and I have horns, Dear? The devil? no, I'm afraid, 'tis the fleſh, thou harlot. Dear, with the pox. Come, Siren, ſpeak, confeſs, who is this reverend, brawny paſtor?

Læt. Indeed and indeed now, my dear Nykin—I never ſaw this wicked man before.

Fond. Oh, it is a man then, it ſeems.

Læt. Rather, ſure 'tis a wolf in the cloathing of a ſheep.

Fond. Thou art a devil in his proper cloathing, woman's fleſh. What, you know nothing of him, but his fleece here—You don't love mutton?—you Magdalen unconverted.

Bell. Well, now, I know my cue——That is, very honourably to excuſe her, and very impudently accuſe myſelf. [*Aſide.*

Læt. Why then, I wiſh I may never enter into the heav'n of your embraces again, my dear, if ever I ſaw his face before.

Fond. O Lord! O ſtrange! I am in admiration of your impudence. Look at him a little better; he is more modeſt, I warrant you, than to deny it. Come, were you two never face to face before? Speak.

Bell. Since all artifice is vain—and I think myſelf oblig'd to ſpeak the truth in juſtice to your wife—No.

Fond. Humph.

Læt. No, indeed, Dear.

Fond. Nay, I find you are both in a ſtory; that I muſt confeſs. But, what—not to be cured of the colic? Don't you know your patient, Mrs Quack? Oh, ly upon your ſtomach; lying upon your ſtomach will cure you of the colic. Ah! anſwer me, Jezabel?

Læt. Let the wicked man anſwer for himſelf; does he think that I have nothing to do but excuſe him? 'tis enough if I can clear my own innocence to my own dear.

Bell. By my troth, and ſo 'tis—I have been a little too backward, that's the truth on't.

Fond. Come, Sir, who are you, in the firſt place? And what are you?

Bell. A whoremaſter.

Fond. Very conciſe.

Læt. O beaſtly, impudent creature!

Fond. Well, Sir, and what came you hither for?

Bell. To ly with your wife.

Fond. Good again—a very civil perſon this, and I believe ſpeaks truth.

Læt. Oh, inſupportable inſolence!

Fond. Well, Sir,—Pray be cover'd—and you have—heh! you have finiſh'd the matter, heh? And I am, as I ſhould be, a ſort of a civil perquiſite to a whoremaſter, call'd a *cuckold*, heh? Is it not ſo? Come, I'm inclining to believe every word you ſay.

Bell. Why, faith, I muſt confeſs, ſo I deſign'd you—But you were a little unlucky in coming ſo ſoon, and hindered the making of your own fortune.

Fond. Humph. Nay, if you mince the matter once, and go back of your word, you are not the perſon I took you for. Come, come, go on boldly—What, don't be aſham'd of your profeſſion—Confeſs, confeſs, I ſhall love thee the better for't—I ſhall, i'feck—What, doſt think I don't know how to behave myſelf in the employment of a cuckold, and have been three years

apprentice to matrimony! Come, come, plain-dealing is a jewel.

Bell. Well, since I see thou art a good honest fellow, I'll confess the whole matter to thee.

Fond. Oh, I am a very honest fellow—You never lay with an honester man's wife in your life.

Læt. How my heart akes! All my comfort lyes in his impudence; and Heaven be prais'd, he has a considerable portion. [*Aside.*

Bell. In short then, I was inform'd of the opportunity of your absence, by my spy, (for faith, honest Isaac, I have a long time design'd thee this favour), I knew Spintext was to come by your direction.—But I laid a trap for him, and procured his habit; in which I pass'd upon your servants, and was conducted hither. I pretended a fit of the colic, to excuse my lying down upon your bed; hoping that when she heard of it, her good-nature would bring her to administer remedies for my distemper—You know what might have follow'd—But like an uncivil person you knock'd at the door, before your wife was come to me.

Fond. Ha! this is apocryphal; I may chuse whether I will believe it or no.

Bell. That you may, faith, and I hope you won't believe a word on't—but I can't help telling the truth, for my life.

Fond. How! would not you have me believe you, say you?

Bell. No; for then you must of consequence part with your wife, and there will be some hopes of having her upon the public; then the encouragement of a separate maintenance———

Fond. No, no; for that matter—when she and I part, she'll carry her separate maintenance about her.

Læt. Ah, cruel Dear, how can you be so barbarous? You'll break my heart, if you talk of parting! [*Cries.*

Fond. Ah, dissembling vermin!

Bell. How canst thou be so cruel, Isaac? Thou hast the heart of a mountain-tiger. By the faith of a sincere sinner, she's innocent for me. Go to him, Madam, fling

your ſnowy arms about his ſtubborn neck: bathe his relentleſs face in your ſalt trickling tears——

[*She goes and hangs about his neck, and kiſſes him.*

Bellmour *kiſſes her hand behind* Fondlewife's *back.*

So, a few ſoft words, and a kiſs, and the good man melts. See how kind Nature works, and boils over in him.

Læt. Indeed, my Dear, I was but juſt come down ſtairs, when you knock'd at the door; and the maid told me Mr Spintext was ill of the colic, upon our bed. And won't you ſpeak to me, cruel Nykin? Indeed, I'll die, if you don't.

Fond. Ah! No, no, I cannot ſpeak, my heart's ſo full—I have been a tender huſband, a tender yokefellow; you know I have—But thou haſt been a faithleſs Delilah, and the Philiſtines—Heh! Art thou not vile and unclean, heh? Speak. [*Weeping.*

Læt. No——h. [*Sighing.*

Fond. Oh, that I could believe thee!

Læt. Oh, my heart will break! [*Seeming to faint.*

Fond Heh, how! No, ſtay, ſtay, I will believe thee, I will.——Pray bend her forward, Sir.

Læt. Oh! oh! where is my Dear?

Fond. Here, here; I do believe thee—I won't believe my own eyes.

Bell. For my part, I am ſo charm'd with the love of your turtle to you, that I'll go and ſolicit matrimony with all my might and main.

Fond. Well, well, Sir; as long as I believe it, 'tis well enough. No thanks to you, Sir, for her virtue. ——But, I'll ſhew you the way out of my houſe, if you pleaſe. Come, my dear, nay, I will believe thee: I do, i'feck.

Bell. See the great bleſſing of an eaſy faith! opinion cannot err.

No huſband, by his wife, can be deceiv'd,
She ſtill is virtuous, if ſhe's ſo believ'd.

ACT V. SCENE I.

The Street.

BELLMOUR *in fanatic habit*, SETTER, HEARTWELL, LUCY.

BELLMOUR.

SETTER! well encounter'd.

Setter. Joy of your return, Sir. Have you made a good voyage; or have you brought your own lading back?

Bell. No, I have brought nothing but ballaſt back—made a delicious voyage, Setter: and might have rode at anchor in the port 'till this time, but the enemy ſurpris'd us—I would unrig.

Setter. I attend you, Sir.

Bell. Ha! is not that Heartwell at Silvia's door? Be gone quickly, I'll follow you:—I would not be known. Pox take 'em, they ſtand juſt in my way.

SCENE II.

BELLMOUR, HEARTWELL, LUCY.

Heart. I'm impatient 'till it be done.

Lucy. That may be, without troubling yourſelf to go again for your brother's chaplain. Don't you ſee that ſtalking form of godlineſs?

Heart. O ay, he's a fanatic.

Lucy. An executioner qualified to do your buſineſs. He has been lawfully ordain'd.

Heart. I'll pay him well, if you'll break the matter to him.

Lucy. I warrant you—Do you go and prepare your bride.

SCENE III.

BELLMOUR, LUCY.

Bell. Humph, ſits the wind there?——What a lucky rogue am I! Oh, what ſport will be here, if I can perſuade this wench to ſecrecy?

Lucy. Sir; reverend Sir.

Bell. Madam. [*Discovers himself.*

Lucy. Now, goodneſs have mercy upon me! Mr Bellmour! is it you?

Bell. Even I, what doſt think?

Lucy. Think! that I ſhou'd not believe my eyes, and that you are not what you ſeem to be.

Bell. True. But to convince thee who I am, thou know'ſt my old token. [*Kiſſes her.*

Lucy. Nay, Mr Bellmour: O Lard! I believe you are a parſon in good earneſt, you kiſs ſo devoutly.

Bell. Well, your buſineſs with me, Lucy?

Lucy. I had none, but through miſtake.

Bell. Which miſtake you muſt go through with, Lucy—Come, I know the intrigue between Heartwell and your miſtreſs; and you miſtook me for Tribulation Spintext, to marry 'em—Ha! are not matters in this poſture?—confeſs: come. I'll be faithful; I will i'faith.——What, diffide in me, Lucy?

Lucy. Alas-a-day! Sir, you and Mr Vainlove, between you, have ruin'd my poor miſtreſs: you have made a gap in her reputation! and can you blame her if ſhe make it up with a huſband?

Bell. Well, is it as I ſay?

Lucy. Well, it is then: but you'll be ſecret?

Bell. Phuh, ſecret, ay!—And to be out of thy debt, I'll truſt thee with another ſecret. Your miſtreſs muſt not marry Heartwell, Lucy.

Lucy. How! O Lord!——

Bell. Nay, don't be in a paſſion, Lucy:—I'll provide a fitter huſband for her—come, here's earneſt of my good intentions for thee too; let this mollify.——[*Gives her money.*] Look you, Heartwell is my friend; and tho' he be blind, I muſt not ſee him fall into the ſnare, and wittingly marry a whore.

Lucy. Whore! I'd have you to know my miſtreſs ſcorns——

Bell. Nay, nay: look you, Lucy; there are whores of as good quality—but to the purpoſe, if you will give me leave to acquaint you with it—do you carry on the

miſtake of me: I'll marry 'em——Nay, don't pauſe; ——If you do, I'll ſpoil all.——I have ſome private reaſons for what I do, which I'll tell you within.——In the mean time, I promiſe,—and rely upon me,—to help your miſtreſs to a huſband: nay, and thee too, Lucy—Here's my hand, I will; with a freſh aſſurance.

[*Gives her more money.*

Lucy. Ah, the devil is not ſo cunning—you know my eaſy nature——Well, for once I'll venture to ſerve you; but if you do deceive me, the curſe of all tender-hearted women light upon thee!

Bell. That's as much as to ſay, *the pox take me.*——Well, lead on.

SCENE IV.

VAINLOVE, SHARPER, *and* SETTER.

Sharp. Juſt now, ſay you, gone in with Lucy?

Set. I ſaw him, and ſtood at the corner where you found me, and overheard all they ſaid: Mr Bellmour is to marry 'em.

Sharp. Ha, ha; 'twill be a pleaſant cheat,—I'll plague Heartwell when I ſee him. Pr'ythee, Frank, let's teaze him; make him fret 'till he foam at the mouth, and diſgorge his matrimonial oath with intereſt—come, thou'rt muſty——

Set to Sharper.] Sir, a word with you. [*Whiſpers him.*

Vain. Sharper ſwears ſhe has forſworn the letter—I'm ſure he tells me truth;—but I am not ſure ſhe told him truth—yet ſhe was unaffectedly concern'd, he ſays; and often bluſh'd with anger and ſurpriſe;—And ſo I remember in the park—ſhe had reaſon, if I wrong her—I begin to doubt.

Sharp. Say'ſt thou ſo!

Setter. This afternoon, Sir, about an hour before my maſter receiv'd the letter.

Sharp. In my conſcience, like enough.

Setter. Ay, I know her, Sir: at leaſt, I'm ſure I can fiſh it out of her: ſhe's the very ſluice to her Lady's ſecrets: 'tis but ſetting her mill a-going, and I can drain her of 'em all.

Sharp. Here, Frank, your blood-hound has made out the fault: this letter, that ſo ſticks in thy maw, is counterfeit; only a trick of Silvia in revenge, contrived by Lucy.

Vain. Ha! it has a colour—but how do you know it, Sirrah?

Setter. I do ſuſpect as much;—becauſe why, Sir.—ſhe was pumping me about how your Worſhip's affairs ſtood toward Madam Araminta; as when you had ſeen her laſt? when you were to ſee her next? and where you were to be found at that time? and ſuch like.

Vain. And where did you tell her?

Setter. In the Piazza.

Vain. There I receiv'd the letter—It muſt be ſo—and why did you not find me out, to tell me this before, ſot?

Setter. Sir, I was pimping for Mr Bellmour.

Sharp. You were well employ'd:—I think there is no objection to the excuſe.

Vain. Pox o'my ſaucy credulity—If I have loſt her, I deſerve it. But if confeſſion and repentance be of force, I'll win her, or weary her into a forgiveneſs.

Sharp. Methinks I long to ſee Bellmour come forth.

SCENE V.

SHARPER, BELLMOUR, SETTER.

Setter. Talk of the devil—See where he comes.

Sharp. Hugging himſelf in his proſperous miſchief—no real fanatic can look better pleas'd after a ſucceſsful ſermon of ſedition.

Bell. Sharper! fortify thy ſpleen: ſuch a jeſt! ſpeak when thou art ready.

Sharp. Now, were I ill-natur'd, would I utterly diſappoint thy mirth: hear thee tell thy mighty jeſt, with as much gravity as a biſhop hears venereal cauſes in the ſpiritual court: not ſo much as wrinkle my face with one ſmile, but let thee look ſimply, and laugh by thyſelf.

Bell. P'ſhaw, no; I have a better opinion of thy wit—Gad, I defy thee.——

Sharp. Were it not loſs of time, you ſhould make the experiment. But honeſt Setter here overheard you with Lucy, and has told me all.

Bell. Nay then, I thank thee for not putting me out of countenance. But, to tell you ſomething you don't know, got I an opportunity (after I had marry'd 'em) of diſcovering the cheat to Silvia. She took it at firſt, as another woman would the like diſappointment; but my promiſe to make her amends quickly with another huſband, ſomewhat pacify'd her.

Sharp. But how the devil do you think to acquit yourſelf of your promiſe? will you marry her yourſelf?

Bell. I have no ſuch intentions at preſent—pr'ythee, wilt thou think a little for me? I am ſure the ingenious Mr Setter will aſſiſt.

Setter. O Lord, Sir!

Bell. I'll leave him with you, and go ſhift my habit.

SCENE VI.

SHARPER, SETTER, *Sir* JOSEPH *and* BLUFFE.

Sharp. Heh! ſure, fortune has ſent this fool hither on purpoſe. Setter, ſtand cloſe; ſeem not to obſerve 'em; and, hark ye——— [*Whiſpers.*

Bluffe. Fear him not—I am prepar'd for him now; and he ſhall find he might have ſafer rouz'd a ſleeping lion.

Sir Jo. Huſh, huſh: don't you ſee him?

Bluffe. Shew him to me.———Where is he?

Sir Jo. Nay, don't ſpeak ſo loud—I don't jeſt, as I did a little while ago—look yonder—A-gad if he ſhould hear the lion roar, he'd cudgel him into an aſs, and his primitive braying. Don't you remember the ſtory in Æſop's Fables, Bully? A-gad there are good morals to be pick'd out of Æſop's Fables, let me tell you that; and Renard the Fox too.

Bluffe. Damn your morals.

Sir Jo. Pr'ythee don't ſpeak ſo loud.

Bluffe. Damn your morals, I muſt revenge th' affront done to my honour. [*In a low voice.*

Sir Jo. Ay; do, do, Captain, if you think fitting.—— You may diſpoſe of your own fleſh as you think fitting, d'ye ſee:——But by the Lord Harry, I'll leave you.

[*Stealing away upon his tiptoes.*

Bluffe. Prodigious! what, will you forſake your friend in extremity! you can't in honour refuſe to carry him a challenge.

[*Almoſt whiſpering, and treading ſoftly after him.*

Sir Jo. Pr'ythee, what do you ſee in my face, that looks as if I would carry a challenge; honour is your province, Captain; take it—all the world know me to be a Knight, and a man of worſhip.

Setter. I warrant you, Sir, I'm inſtructed.

Sharp. Impoſſible! Araminta take a liking to a fool!

[*Aloud.*

Setter. Her head runs on nothing elſe, nor ſhe can talk of nothing elſe.

Sharp. I know ſhe commended him all the while we were in the park; but thought it had been only to make Vainlove jealous.——

Sir Jo. How's this! good bully, hold your breath and let's hearken. A-gad, this muſt be I.——

Sharp. Death, it can't be.—An oaf, an idiot, a wittal.

Sir Jo. Ay, now it's out; 'tis I, my own individual perſon.

Sharp. A wretch, that has flown for ſhelter to the loweſt ſhrub of mankind, and ſeeks protection from a blaſted coward.

Sir Jo. That's you, bully, back.

[Bluffe *frowns upon Sir* Joſeph.

Sharp. She has given Vainlove her promiſe to marry him before to-morrow morning.——Has ſhe not?

[*To* Setter.

Setter. She has, Sir;——And I have it in charge to attend her all this evening, in order to conduct her to the place appointed.

Sharp. Well, I'll go and inform your maſter; and do you preſs her to make all the haſte imaginable.

SCENE VII.

SETTER, *Sir* JOSEPH, BLUFFE.

Setter. Were I a rogue now, what a noble prize could I diſpoſe of! a good pinnace, richly laden, and to launch forth under my auſpicious convoy. Twelve thouſand pounds and all her rigging; beſides what lyes conceal'd under hatches—Ha! all this committed to my care!—Avaunt temptation——Setter, ſhew thyſelf a perſon of worth; be true to thy truſt, and be reputed honeſt! Hum: is that all? Ay: for to be honeſt is nothing; the reputation of it is all. Reputation! what have ſuch poor rogues as I to do with reputation? 'tis above us; and for men of quality, they are above it; ſo that reputation is e'en as fooliſh a thing as honeſty. And for my part, if I meet Sir Joſeph with a purſe of gold in his hand, I'll diſpoſe of mine to the beſt advantage.

Sir Jo. Heh, heh, heh! Here 'tis for you, i'faith, Mr Setter. Nay, I'll take you at your word.

[*Chinking a purſe.*

Setter. Sir Joſeph and the Captain too! undone, undone! I'm undone, my maſter's undone, my Lady's undone, and all the buſineſs is undone.

Sir Jo. No, no, never fear, man, the lady's buſineſs ſhall be done. What—Come, Mr Setter, I have overheard all, and to ſpeak is but loſs of time; but if there be occaſion, let theſe worthy gentlemen intercede for me. [*Gives him gold.*

Setter. O Lord, Sir, what d'ye mean? corrupt my honeſty?——They have indeed very perſuading faces. But———

Sir Jo. 'Tis too little: there's more, man. There, take all———Now———

Setter. Well, Sir Joſeph, you have ſuch a winning way with you———

Sir Jo. And how, and how, good Setter, did the little rogue look, when ſhe talk'd of Sir Joſeph? Did not her eyes twinkle, and her mouth water? Did not ſhe pull up her little bubbies? and—agad, I'm ſo overjoy'd—

and ſtroke down her belly? and then ſtep aſide to tie her garter, when ſhe was thinking of her love? Heh, Setter!

Setter. Oh, yes, Sir.

Sir Jo. How now, bully? What! melancholy, becauſe I'm in the lady's favour?——No matter, I'll make your peace——I know they were a little ſmart upon you—but I warrant I'll bring you into the lady's good graces.

Bluffe. Pſhaw, I have petitions to ſhew, from other-gueſs toys than ſhe. Look here; theſe were ſent me this morning—There, read. [*Shews letters.*] That's—that's a ſcrawl of quality. Here, here's from a counteſs too. Hum——No, hold——that's from a knight's wife, ſhe ſent it me by her huſband——But here, both theſe are from perſons of great quality.

Sir Jo. They are either from perſons of great quality, or no quality at all, 'tis ſuch a damn'd ugly hand.

[*While Sir* Jo. *reads*, Bluffe *whiſpers* Setter.

Setter. Captain, I would do any thing to ſerve you; but this is ſo difficult——

Bluffe. Not at all. Don't I know him?

Setter. You'll remember the conditions?——

Bluffe. I'll give't you under my hand.——In the mean time, here's earneſt. [*Gives him money.*] Come, knight—I'm capitulating with Mr Setter for you.

Sir Jo. Ay, honeſt Setter——Sirrah, I'll give thee any thing but a night's lodging.

SCENE VIII.

SHARPER *tugging in* HEARTWELL.

Sharp. Nay, pr'ythee, leave railing, and come along with me; may be ſhe mayn't be within. 'Tis but to yond' corner-houſe.

Heart. Whither? whither? which corner-houſe?

Sharp. Why, there: the two white poſts.

Heart. And who would you viſit there, ſay you? (Oons, how my heart akes!)

Sharp. Pſhaw, thou'rt ſo troubleſome and inquiſitive—

Why, I'll tell you; 'tis a young creature that Vainlove debauch'd, and has forſaken. Did you never hear Bellmour chide him about Silvia?

Heart. Death, and hell, and marriage! My wife. [*Aſide.*

Sharp. Why, thou art as muſty as a new-marry'd man, that had found his wife knowing the firſt night.

Heart. Hell, and the devil! Does he know it? But, hold——if he ſhould not, I were a fool to diſcover it ——I'll diſſemble and try him. [*Aſide.*] Ha, ha, ha! Why, Tom, is that ſuch an occaſion of melancholy? is it ſuch an uncommon miſchief?

Sharp. No, faith; I believe not.——Few women but have their year of probation, before they are cloiſter'd in the narrow joys of wedlock. But, pr'ythee, come along with me, or I'll go and have the lady to myſelf. B'w'ye, George. [*Going.*

Heart. O torture! how he racks and tears me!—— Death! ſhall I own my ſhame, or wittingly let him go and whore my wife? No, that's inſupportable——Oh, Sharper!

Sharp. How now?

Heart. Oh, I am——married.

Sharp. (Now hold ſpleen.) Marry'd!

Heart. Certainly, irrecoverably marry'd.

Sharp. Heav'n forbid, man! How long?

Heart. Oh, an age, an age! I have been marry'd theſe two hours.

Sharp. My old bachelor marry'd! That were a jeſt. Ha, ha, ha!

Heart. Death! d'ye mock me? Hark'ee, if either you eſteem my friendſhip, or your own ſafety—— Come not near that houſe—that corner-houſe——that hot brothel. Aſk no queſtions.

Sharp. Mad, by this light!

Thus grief ſtill treads upon the heels of pleaſure:
Marry'd in haſte, we may repent at leiſure.

SCENE IX.

SHARPER, SETTER.

Setter. Some by experience find thoſe words miſplac'd:
At leiſure marry'd, they repent in haſte.
As I ſuppoſe my maſter Heartwell.

Sharp. Here again, my Mercury!

Setter. Sublimate, if you pleaſe, Sir: I think my atchievements do deſerve the epithet——Mercury was a pimp too; but, though I bluſh to own it, at this time, I muſt confeſs, I am ſomewhat fall'n from the dignity of my function, and do condeſcend to be ſcandalouſly employ'd in the promotion of vulgar matrimony.

Sharp. As how, dear dexterous pimp?

Setter. Why, to be brief, for I have weighty affairs depending——Our ſtratagem ſucceeded as you intended——Bluffe turns arrant traitor; bribes me to make a private conveyance of the lady to him, and put a ſham ſettlement upon Sir Joſeph.

Sharp. O rogue! Well, but I hope——

Setter. No, no; never fear me, Sir——I privately inform'd the knight of the treachery; who has agreed ſeemingly to be cheated, that the Captain may be ſo in reality.

Sharp. Where's the bride?

Setter. Shifting clothes for the purpoſe, at a friend's houſe of mine. Here's company coming; if you'll walk this way, Sir, I'll tell you.

SCENE X.

BELLMOUR, BELINDA, ARAMINTA, *and* VAINLOVE.

Vain. Oh, 'twas frenzy all: cannot you forgive it?—Men in madneſs have a title to your pity. [*To* Aram.

Aram. ——Which they forfeit, when they are reſtor'd to their ſenſes.

Vain. I am not preſuming beyond a pardon.

Aram. You who cou'd reproach me with one counterfeit, how inſolent would a real pardon make you!

But there's no need to forgive what is not worth my anger.

Belin. O' my conſcience, I cou'd find in my heart to marry thee, purely to be rid of thee——At leaſt, thou art ſo troubleſome a lover, there's hopes thou'lt make a more than ordinary quiet huſband. [*To* Bell.

Bell. Say you ſo?——Is that a maxim among ye?

Belin. Yes: you fluttering men of the mode have made marriage a mere French diſh.

Bell. I hope there's no French ſauce. [*Aſide.*

Belin. You are ſo curious in the preparation, that is, your courtſhip, one wou'd think you meant a noble entertainment—but when we come to feed, 'tis all froth, and poor, but in ſhow. Nay, often, only remains, which have been, I know not how many times, warm'd for other company, and at laſt ſerv'd up cold to the wife.

Bell. That were a miſerable wretch indeed, who could not afford one warm diſh for the wife of his boſom—But you timorous virgins form a dreadful chimera of a huſband, as of a creature contrary to that ſoft, humble, pliant, eaſy thing, a lover; ſo gueſs at plagues in matrimony, in oppoſition to the pleaſures of courtſhip. Alas! courtſhip to marriage, is but as the muſic in the playhouſe, till the curtain's drawn; but that once up, then opens the ſcene of pleaſure.

Belin. Oh, foh—no: rather, courtſhip to marriage, is as a very witty prologue to a very dull play.

SCENE XI.

To them SHARPER.

Sharp. Hiſt——Bellmour: if you'll bring the ladies, make haſte to Silvia's lodgings, before Heartwell has fretted himſelf out of breath.——

Bell. You have an opportunity now, Madam, to revenge yourſelf upon Heartwell, for affronting your ſquirrel. [*To* Belinda.

Belin. O the filthy rude beaſt.

Aram. 'Tis a laſting quarrel: I think he has never been at our houſe ſince.

Bell. But give yourſelves the trouble to walk to that corner-houſe, and I'll tell you by the way what may divert and ſurpriſe you.

SCENE XII.

Silvia's *Lodgings.*

HEARTWELL *and* BOY.

Heart. Gone forth, ſay you, with her maid!

Boy. There was a man too that fetch'd 'em out—— Setter, I think they call'd him.

Heart. Soh—that precious pimp too!——Damn'd, damn'd ſtrumpet! Cou'd ſhe not contain herſelf on her wedding day! not hold out till night! O curſed ſtate! How wide we err, when apprehenſive of the load of life!

——We hope to find
That help which Nature meant in womankind,
To man that ſupplemental ſelf deſign'd;
But proves a burning cauſtic when apply'd,
And Adam, ſure, cou'd with more eaſe abide
The bone when broken, than when made a bride.

SCENE XIII.

To him BELLMOUR, BELINDA, VAINLOVE, ARAMINTA.

Bell. Now, George, what, rhyming! I thought the chimes of verſe were paſt, when once the doleful marriage knell was rung.

Heart. Shame and confuſion! I am expoſed.

[Vain. *and* Aram. *talk apart.*

Belin. Joy, joy, Mr Bridegroom! I give you joy, Sir.

Heart. 'Tis not in thy nature to give me joy—a woman can as ſoon give immortality.

Belin. Ha, ha, ha! O Gad, men grow ſuch clowns when they are marry'd.

Bell. That they are fit for no company but their wives.

Belin. Nor for them neither, in a little time—I swear at the month's end you shall hardly find a married man that will do a civil thing to his wife, or say a civil thing to any body else. How he looks already! Ha, ha, ha!

Bell. Ha, ha, ha!

Heart. Death, am I made your laughing-stock? For you, Sir, I shall find a time; but take off your wasp here, or the clown may grow boisterous, I have a fly-flap.

Belin. You have occasion for't, your wife has been blown upon.

Bell. That's home.

Heart. Not fiends nor furies could have added to my vexation, or any thing, but another woman—You've rack'd my patience; be gone, or by———

Bell. Hold, hold! What the devil, thou wilt not draw upon a woman!

Vain. What's the matter?

Aram. Bless me! what have you done to him?

Belin Only touch'd a gall'd beast till he winch'd.

Vain. Bellmour, give it o'er; you vex him too much: 'tis all serious to him.

Belin. Nay, I swear, I begin to pity him myself.

Heart. Damn your pity—But let me be calm a little ——How have I deserv'd this of you? Any of ye? Sir, have I impair'd the honour of your house, promis'd your sister marriage, and whor'd her! Wherein have I injur'd you? Did I bring a physician to your father when he lay expiring, and endeavour to prolong his life, and you one-and-twenty? Madam, have I had an opportunity with you and baulk'd it? Did you ever offer me the savour that I refus'd it? Or———

Belin. Oh, foh! What does the filthy fellow mean? Lard, let me be gone.

Aram. Hang me if I pity you; you are right enough serv'd.

Bell. This is a little scurrilous tho'.

Vain. Nay, 'tis a sore of your own scratching—Well, George———

Heart. You are the principal cauſe of all my preſent ills. If Silvia had not been your miſtreſs, my wife might have been honeſt.

Vain. And if Silvia had not been your wife, my miſtreſs might have been juſt——There we are even—but have a good heart, I heard of your misfortune, and come to your relief.

Heart. When execution's over, you offer a reprieve.

Vain. What would you give?

Heart. Oh! any thing, every thing, a leg, or two, or an arm; nay, I would be divorced from my virility, to be divorced from my wife.

SCENE XIV.

To them SHARPER.

Vain. Faith, that's a ſure way—But here's one can ſell you freedom better cheap.

Sharp. Vainlove, I have been a kind of a godfather to you, yonder. I have promiſed and vowed ſome things in your name, which I think you are bound to perform.

Vain. No ſigning to a blank, friend.

Sharp. No, I'll deal fairly with you———'Tis a full and free diſcharge to Sir Joſeph Wittoll and Captain Bluffe, for all injuries whatſoever, done unto you by them, until the preſent date hereof—How ſay you?

Vain. Agreed.

Sharp. Then, let me beg theſe ladies to wear their maſks a moment. Come in, gentlemen and ladies.

Heart. What the devil's all this to me!

Vain. Patience.

SCENE *the Laſt.*

To them Sir JOSEPH, BLUFFE, SILVIA, LUCY, SETTER.

Bluffe. All injuries whatſoever, Mr Sharper.

Sir Jo. Ay, ay, whatſoever, Captain; ſtick to that; whatſoever.

Sharp. 'Tis done; theſe gentlemen are witneſſes to the general releaſe.

Vain. Ay, ay, to this inſtant moment——I have paſs'd an act of oblivion.

Bluffe. 'Tis very generous, Sir, ſince I needs muſt own——

Sir Jo. No, no, Captain, you need not own, heh, heh, heh! 'tis I muſt own——

Bluffe. —That you are over-reach'd too, ha, ha, ha! only a little art-military us'd——only undermined, or ſo, as ſhall appear by the fair Araminta, my wife's permiſſion. Oh, the devil, cheated at laſt!

[Lucy *unmaſks.*

Sir Jo. Only a little art-military trick, Captain, only countermin'd, or ſo——Mr Vainlove, I ſuppoſe you know whom I have got——Now, but all's forgiven.

Vain. I know whom you have not got: pray, Ladies, convince him. [Aram. *and* Belin. *unmaſk.*

Sir Jo. Ah! O Lord, my heart akes—Ah, Setter, a rogue of all ſides.

Sharp. Sir Joſeph, you had better have pre-engag'd this gentleman's pardon: for though Vainlove be ſo generous to forgive the loſs of his miſtreſs——I know not how Heartwell may take the loſs of his wife.

[Silvia *unmaſks.*

Heart. My wife! By this light 'tis ſhe! the very cockatrice——Oh, Sharper! let me embrace thee—But art thou ſure ſhe is really marry'd to him?

Setter. Really and lawfully marry'd. I am witneſs.

Sharp. Bellmour will unriddle to you.

[Heart. *goes to* Bell.

Sir Jo. Pray, Madam, who are you? For I find, you and I are like to be better acquainted.

Sil. The worſt of me, is, that I am your wife——

Sharp. Come, Sir Joſeph, your fortune is not ſo bad as your fear——A fine lady, and a lady of very good quality.

Sir Jo. Thanks to my knighthood, ſhe's a lady—

Vain. —That deſerves a fool with a better title — Pray uſe her as my relation, or you ſhall hear on't.

Bluffe. What! are you a woman of quality too, ſpouſe?

Setter. And my relation; pray let her be reſpected accordingly—— Well, honeſt Lucy, fare thee well—— I think you and I have been play-fellows off and on, any time this ſeven years.

Lucy. Hold your prating———I'm thinking what vocation I ſhall follow while my ſpouſe is planting laurels in the wars.

Bluffe. No more wars, ſpouſe, no more wars——— While I plant laurels for my head abroad, I may find the branches ſprout at home.

Heart. Bellmour, I approve thy mirth, and thank thee—and I cannot in gratitude (for I ſee which way thou art going) ſee thee fall into the ſame ſnare out of which thou haſt deliver'd me.

Bell. I thank thee, George, for thy good intention— But there is a fatality in marriage——for I find I'm reſolute.

Heart. Then good counſel will be thrown away upon you———For my part, I have once eſcap'd———and when I wed again, may ſhe be———ugly, as an old bawd.

Vain. Ill-natur'd as an old maid———

Bell. Wanton as a young widow———

Sharp. And jealous as a barren wife.

Heart. Agreed.

Bell. Well; 'midſt of theſe dreadful denunciations, and notwithſtanding the warning and example before me, I commit myſelf to laſting durance.

Belin. Priſoner, make much of your fetters.

[*Giving her hand.*

Bell. Frank, will you keep us in countenance?

Vain. May I preſume to hope ſo great a bleſſing?

Aram. We had better take the advantage of a little of our friends experience firſt.

Bell. O' my conſcience, ſhe dare not conſent, for fear he ſhou'd recant. [*Aſide.*] Well, we ſhall have your

company to church in the morning——May be it may get you an appetite, to ſee us fall to before ye: Setter, did not you tell me?——

Setter. They're at the door: I'll call 'em in.

A DANCE.

Bell. Now ſet me forward on a journey for life——Come, take your fellow-travellers. Old George, I'm ſorry to ſee thee ſtill plod on alone.

Heart. With gaudy plumes and gingling bells made proud,
Thy youthful beaſt ſets forth, and neighs aloud.
A morning-ſun his tinſell'd harneſs gilds,
And the firſt ſtage a down-hill green-ſword yields.
But, oh——
What rugged ways attend the noon of life!
(Our ſun declines), and with what anxious ſtrife,
What pain we tug that galling load, a wife.
All courſers the firſt heat with vigour run;
But 'tis with whip and ſpur the race is won.

[*Exeunt omnes* †.

† This was the firſt piece of this juſtly-admired author's writings, being brought on the ſtage when he was not above nineteen years of age; yet it met with general and moſt deſerved applauſe, and is perhaps, in the ſprightlineſs and genuine wit of the dialogue, and the pure nature and ſelf-conſiſtency of the characters, one of the moſt extraordinary inſtances of brilliant genius, joined to ripened judgment, in a perſon of ſo tender an age.——The critics have found fault with his having ſuffered his characters to be married in maſks, a practice ſcarcely ever made uſe of in real life: yet ſomething ſurely is to be allowed to the *licentia poetica*; and the cuſtom of conducting the cataſtrophes of comedies at that time, ſeems to give a kind of ſanction to this overſight, eſpecially in ſo young a writer, whoſe imagination might ſometimes, perhaps, hurry him beyond the limits of probability.

EPILOGUE.

Spoken by Mrs BARRY.

AS a raſh girl, who will all hazards run,
And be enjoy'd, tho' ſure to be undone;
Soon as her curioſity is over,
Would give the world ſhe could her toy recover:
So fares it with our poet; and I'm ſent
To tell you, he already does repent.
Would you were all as forward to keep Lent.
Now the deed's done, the giddy thing has leiſure
To think o' th' ſting that's in the tail of pleaſure.
Methinks I hear him in conſideration,
What will the world ſay? Where's my reputation?
Now that's at ſtake.——No, fool, 'tis out o' faſhion.
If loſs of that ſhould follow want of wit,
How many undone men were in the pit!
Why, that's ſome comfort to an Author's fears,
If he's an aſs, he will be try'd by's peers.
But hold——I am exceeding my commiſſion;
My buſineſs here, was humbly to petition:
But we're ſo us'd to rail on theſe occaſions,
I could not help one trial of your patience:
For 'tis our way (you know) for fear o' th' worſt,
To be beforehand ſtill, and cry Fool firſt.
How ſay you, Sparks? How do you ſtand affected?
I ſwear, young Bays within is ſo dejected,
'Twou'd grieve your hearts to ſee him; ſhall I call him?
But then you cruel critics would ſo maul him!
Yet, may be, you'll encourage a beginner;
But how?——Juſt as the devil does a ſinner.
Women and wits are us'd e'en much at one,
You gain your end, and damn 'em when you've done.

END OF THE OLD BACHELOR.